

Report of Proceedings 2023

General Synod November Group of Sessions

**Monday 13 November 2023 –
Wednesday 15 November 2023**

Church House, London

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Full Synod: First Day Monday 13 November 2023

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 1.30 pm

The Chair: Members of Synod, we will have a silence before we begin Prayer in the Middle of the Day, and I will leave it to Dylan to decide when we begin.

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: In a moment I will read out the names of new members of Synod. As I read out their names, I would be grateful if they would stand. I will then read out the names of bishops who are attending this group of sessions. Please would they stand? And I will then read out the names of the representatives from the Anglican Communion and please if they would like to stand, and after that the cue for applause is “May we greet them all”. It is not a question; it is a suggestion.

So let us begin. The new members are: the Revd Sue Rose, Diocese of Bath & Wells, replacing the Revd Simon Robinson; the Revd James McCluskey, Diocese of Chelmsford, replacing the Revd Andy Sachs; the Revd - and forgive me for the mispronunciation here, I am not quite sure of the meaning of two dots in Finnish - Tuomas Mäkipää, Diocese in Europe, replacing the Revd Canon Smitha Prasadam, and please remain standing once you have stood; the Revd Richard Seabrook, Diocese in Europe, replacing the Revd Dale Hanson; Mrs Carys Puleston, Diocese of Exeter, replacing Mrs Georgia Mutt; the Revd Canon Andrew Norman, Diocese of Leeds, replacing the Revd Dr Che Seabourne; the Revd Christopher Johnson, Diocese of Leicester, replacing the Revd Wendy Dalrymple; the Revd Dan Leathers, Diocese of Liverpool, replacing the Revd Jack Shepherd; the Revd Adrian Clarke, Diocese of London, replacing the Revd Fiona Jack; the Revd Jonathan Macy, Diocese of Southwark, replacing the Revd Canon Tim Goode; Mrs Alianore Smith, Diocese of Southwark, replacing Mr Carl Hughes; Professor Peter Harris, Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, replacing Mr Gavin Drake; the Revd William Harwood, Diocese of Truro, replacing the Revd Canon Anne Brown; the Revd Jeffrey Terry, Diocese of Truro, replacing the Revd Ian Gulland.

And among the bishops, the Bishop of Aston, the Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst, for the Diocese of Birmingham; the Bishop of Penrith, the Rt Revd Rob Saner-Haigh, for the

Diocese of Carlisle; the Bishop of Taunton, the Rt Revd Ruth Worsley, for the Diocese of Coventry; the Bishop of Huntingdon, the Rt Revd Dagmar Winter, for the Diocese of Ely; the Bishop of Crediton, the Rt Revd Jackie Searle, for the Diocese of Exeter; the Bishop of Brixworth, the Rt Revd John Holbrook, for the Diocese of Peterborough; and the Bishop of Middleton, the Rt Revd Mark Davies, for the Diocese of Sodor & Man.

I warmly welcome and am very grateful, in two cases, for their long journeys and, in one case, very short journey: the Most Rt Revd Kay Goldsworthy AO, the Archbishop of Perth; the Most Revd Albert Chama, the Archbishop of Central Africa; and the Rt Revd Anthony Poggio, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, all the way from Paddington.

May we greet them all.

That concludes our introductions and welcomes and, accordingly, I now hand over to the Chair for our next item of business.

ITEM 2 JOINT PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE CHAIR *The Revd Esther Prior (Guildford)* took the Chair at 1.49 pm

ITEM 2 JOINT PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We come to Item 2, the Joint Presidential Address. I invite the Archbishops to make the Address.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): Synod, this is not exactly a joint Presidential Address; it is more of a several Presidential Address, if you are a lawyer. We are not going to do it in chorus or simultaneously all together.

Most of this Synod meeting, as you probably are aware, will be focused on *Living in Love and Faith* - and Archbishop Stephen will talk to us about that in a moment. I want to say now that I stand in complete agreement with all that he will say.

Before that, I want to reflect on what it means to be part of the global Church in a time of suffering, and particularly at a time when, as the Secretary General of the United Nations said on 19 September at the General Assembly, the world is like a door off its hinges.

The war in Ukraine has rocked the foundations of our presumed peace in Europe. Its effects continue to reverberate around the world, driving food insecurity in Africa, and in many other parts of the world. Civil war is destroying communities and people in Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and so many other countries.

Lives have been devastated by flooding in Bangladesh and Libya, cyclones in North America, rising sea levels in the Pacific, famine in Madagascar, drought in South Sudan and across that region.

And of course the devastating violence in Israel and Palestine is in all our hearts as we meet here today.

The barbaric slaughter of innocent Israelis by Hamas, the kidnapping of men, women and young children has traumatised Israelis and Jewish people around the world. That was borne in me most strongly in a visit to the Holy Land three weeks ago. The level of trauma was overwhelming. It has reawakened terrible memories and sown a profound sense of fear for the future. As one father of someone killed said to me, "I thought at least this was the one country in the world where we were safe".

In Jerusalem recently, I sat with an Israeli Jewish man who told me how members of his family, aged from three to elderly, had all been taken hostage by Hamas. No parent should ever lie awake at night wondering whether their child is alive, whether they are being fed, whether they will ever hold them again. I renew my call for the release of all those held captive since 7 October.

And for the Palestinians of Gaza - who have already suffered for so long under Hamas rule and Israeli occupation and blockade - life has descended into a living hell from which they cannot escape. For all Palestinians, the conflict has reawakened fears of a second Nakba.

Israel's bombardment of Gaza on this unprecedented scale has killed thousands upon thousands of innocent people - including more than 4,000 children. No parent should ever have to write their child's name on their body so they can be identified if they do not survive the next missile. No child should ever die with written on their body "unknown".

The siege has denied people food, water, medical treatment. The current levels of aid entering Gaza are utterly insufficient to meet the needs of more than 2 million people. Doctors are now having to make the choice between who will be operated on without anaesthetic, and who will receive no treatment at all.

The suffering of innocent Palestinians cries out as a great wrong. As I have said before, the evils of Hamas cannot be paid for by the civilians of Gaza.

Meanwhile, the pressure on the West Bank is growing increasingly serious, and there is rising abuse, harassment and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. Settler violence from the illegal settlements under international law, apparently unchecked by Israel as the occupying power, will lead to another arena of unconstrained war unless Israel takes urgent steps to protect Palestinians.

I want to make clear that there is no equivalence between the atrocities of Hamas against Israeli civilians, and the right and duty of Israel to defend itself. I have emphasised that previously, and I do so again. But I also want to make clear that I do not believe the devastating loss of civilian life and humanitarian catastrophe, resulting from Israel's bombardment and siege of Gaza, can be morally justified.

I think we need to be able to say both these things - in fact, it is essential that we do.

International humanitarian law exists for a reason: to protect our common humanity in war. It is our shield against barbarity. All allegations of violations of international law need to be investigated by the relevant authorities.

But as a religious leader, I can say that the killing of so many civilians, the extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, cannot be morally justified.

When I visited Jerusalem, I joined the remarkable, extraordinary Christian leaders there, united as they never have been literally in their history, in calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. That was over three weeks ago. Thousands more innocent men, women and children in Gaza have been killed since then, while thousands in Israel still mourn those killed on 7 October, and hundreds of families still plead for the release of their loved ones.

So I repeat that call again with renewed urgency and even more force. This bloodshed must cease. Hostages must be released, and aid must reach those in Gaza in dire need.

I do not have military or political answers to this crisis. I do not speak from those perspectives. But the call for a ceasefire is a moral cry that we are hearing from people of many faiths and none. Our common humanity must find another way to achieve justice, security and peaceful coexistence for Israelis and Palestinians from now, for the future. In Christ's name, we cry from our hearts: "No more. The killing must stop".

This violence will not secure for the people of the Holy Land the future they deserve and need. All the people of the Holy Land, Israeli and Palestinian. We join the cries for another way to be found.

What do we do as the Church in time of war? Bishop Bell spoke of that in a remarkable essay in 1939. In time of war, he said, the Church must come back to its key calling "to be the Church". It models an alternative way: the pattern of the Christ-life. Reconciled to God in Christ, we are a community of reconciliation and non-violence.

This has been one of the humbling lessons for me as Archbishop of Canterbury: to visit Christians around the world who are witnessing and serving in the midst of conflict, poverty and persecution, as the Church, truly the Church. These are the martyrs, living or dead: martyr in the strict sense of witness, witnessing today.

Churches read the Bible and teach congregations under trees in a refugee camp in Kenya. Worshippers receive the presence of Christ at a Eucharist in a cathedral in Sri Lanka, still scarred by the 2019 Easter bombings. Hymns and praises to God are sung in the South Sea Islands, alongside those bearing the brunt of climate change. Christians are at the forefront of peace-making in South Sudan.

This is part of what makes our formative story as Christians. The conviction that suffering does not have the last word. That even, perhaps especially, in the bleakest situations, the light and life of God is found in the beauty and miracles of resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Here in the UK, the conflict in Israel and Palestine is prising people apart. Jewish people are experiencing the trauma of the biggest single loss of life in one day since the Shoah. They are a small global community, and everyone knows someone killed or taken hostage on 7 October. Muslims, like Christians, feel a deep connection to the Holy Land. The sight of so many Palestinian civilians being killed, the majority of whom are Muslim, cuts deeply into the ties of the family of Islam.

Christians in the UK also suffer particularly when our Palestinian sister and brothers suffer in the Occupied Territories and in Israel itself. We cannot, and we will not, ignore their pain. The Church of England occupies a unique place in the ecology of churches and of faiths in this land. We have a divine calling to be a Church in each community and for each community, whether those we serve are Christians or not. That is the genius of the parish and the diocese, the chaplaincy and all those who minister, lay and ordained, in every part of England. That calling looks different in each community and in every place and part of this country.

Often people are not looking for solutions from us, but we are called to love, to be present, to be alongside, to be faithful, to pray for our enemies, to proclaim the good news of Christ. These are the lessons of our sisters and brothers in the Caucasus, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which I visited the week before 7 October, in Manipur, in Gaza City, in Kyiv, in Nigeria and in so many other places. While there are hateful voices stoking prejudice against anyone for any reason, we cannot stand by.

So we must rebuke those who are spreading vile antisemitic propaganda and harassing and attacking our Jewish neighbours. We must rebuke those who engage in hateful Islamophobic attacks and abuse against our Muslim neighbours. Believing that every person, each person, is made in the image of God means that we have a responsibility to speak out against all such evils, and to live out against all such evils, and to play our part in building bridges across communities.

And the Church must always pray. For when we pray, we are turning away from the delusion of self-sufficiency and saying that God is, in fact, in charge. As Karl Barth puts it, "To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world". Prayer can put the world back on its hinges.

So, Synod, please donate to the Gaza Appeal, please walk alongside those from different communities, but, more than anything else, pray, please pray, for peace, for wisdom, for justice, for hope. It is on the cross and from the empty tomb that Jesus Christ won the battle against evil. It is in our willingness to be present to the suffering of the world that bitterness and brokenness can be transfigured, that peace can be pursued and the ultimate power of God to transform and redeem can be realised and known.

The Diocese of Jerusalem is a church, a small church, that witnesses to Jesus Christ in times of great pain. The staff of Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza continue to this day to provide medical care despite enormous personal risk. Programmes for women's ministries are strengthening relationships in communities across the region, ecumenical and interfaith engagement is fostering understanding and tolerance. All of this work, whether in Gaza, Israel, East Jerusalem or the West Bank, is keeping the hope of a just peace alive in these times of difficulty. Sisters and brothers, let us continue to stand with them in our Christian calling as justice seekers, peace makers, healers and bringers of good news.

It is my privilege now to introduce a message from Archbishop Hosam Naoum, recorded on Friday for us in Jerusalem. Let us listen to the words of someone who is witnessing to Christ amid such fear and uncertainty.

The Archbishop of Jerusalem (The Most Revd Hosam Naoum): Sisters and brothers in Christ, I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, here from Jerusalem, the city of peace, the city of the empty tomb. I am really grateful to Archbishop Justin and Archbishop Stephen for their gracious invitation to join you, albeit virtually, but I am also thankful to each and every member of the General Synod, both lay and ordained, who are welcoming me to be part of your deliberations.

I would like to thank Archbishop Justin for his Presidential Address and for his words of peace and reconciliation. There continues to be a light to many places around the world, and we know that, during war and during the time where we pursue peace, language of reconciliation, trying to speak a word that brings people together can be difficult and it can be controversial. But I believe that, here in the Holy Land, we need that language of peace and reconciliation more than ever, especially since 7 October and the eruption of violence and war in and around Gaza.

I would like to ask your prayers to continue, to hold both Palestinians and Israelis in your prayers, and, as we continue to seek peace in the midst of war, I urge everyone to continue to work towards a peaceful resolution, a ceasefire for humanitarian corridors, and especially for those civilians, the protection of all civilians, especially in Gaza at this time.

We know that violence can be indiscriminate in the sense that civilians, children, women and elderly people are killed in the process and in the line of fire. We ask that all people

be considerate to what is taking place during these times of war, and to be aware that people should not pay the price, especially those who are civilians.

We are always reminded, especially as we celebrated last weekend Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday, that, at the end of the day, war will end, and what we will remember is all those who have lost their lives, and also we will remember those who have fought for the freedom of people, their own nations around the world.

In a time of war, especially here in the Middle East and the Holy Land, both Palestinians and Israelis are seeking a better future, but this does not mean that violence can be the only way, or even the way in which we strive for peace and reconciliation. You know, the language of guns and the sound of bullets were never the way forward where people would live together side by side.

So if we are really concerned about the security for Israelis and the self-determination of the Palestinian people for a free and enduring and durable state in the future, we need the efforts of everyone around the world, that we may focus on the day after the war where peace, a just and lasting one, will be the only way forward for the end of the cycle of violence here in the Holy Land.

Again, as we remember many places around the world, whether it is Ukraine or Sudan or many other places where there is so much devastation, so much violence, and as we continue to care for the Creation, our own mother planet Earth, I urge each and every one of us, and especially those who are Christians around the world, to continue to care for our world, for our Creation and part of that are human beings in whom God has grounded his Creation with those created in God's image.

So as we continue to strive for peace, and as we continue to spread the word of reconciliation, even though it falls on deaf ears at this time of war and violence and suffering, we need to hold to what we believe in because that is what God has called us for.

And as John has recorded, one of the most beautiful verses that Jesus had spoken to his people, in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life and have it in abundance", so may the gift of life, light and peace prevail here in the Holy Land, here in Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

May God bless you all, and I wish you all the best as you continue in your deliberations at your General Synod, that Christ may increase in England and around the world. Amen.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): The Psalmist speaks to God in Psalm 39, "Hear my prayer, oh Lord, and give ear to my cry. Do not hold your peace at my tears". Hearing Archbishop Hosam speak to us from the holy city of the resurrection, we join with that prayer as their prayer. With our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, we weep, we grieve, we lament and we protest and we pray for justice,

for reconciliation, for hope and for peace, “Hear my prayer, oh Lord, and give ear to my cry. Do not hold your peace at my tears”. In the same Psalm, the Psalmist clings to God, who alone brings peace and justice: “And now, oh Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you”.

If you are comfortable standing, I invite as many as can now to stand in silent prayer for the people of Israel and Palestine, whether they be Christian, Jewish or Muslim, and for God’s Church in the Holy Land, for about two minutes.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) led the Synod in an act of worship.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Dear friends, we now turn from the unbearable sadness of all that is happening in our world, especially in Israel and Gaza, to the reason we are holding this November General Synod, our continuing discussion on *Living in Love and Faith*. And the task of this Presidential Address, my task as Archbishop, is to seek to draw us together across our differences, reminding us of who we are in Christ.

Because this is why we are here this week, we are looking for ways to enact the decisions we made in February that will honour God, uphold the unity and doctrine of the Church, offer care, kindness and compassion in our communities, serve our nation, and most of all, for me, always most of all, make Jesus know. And that is the question that I keep coming back to: how can we know and see Jesus in the discussions of this Synod, knowing that there are heavy disagreements between us?

Well, first of all, it will be how we disagree and how we express our deeply-held convictions, how we live, in the powerful phrase that Timothy Radcliffe used in the retreat before the recent meeting of the Roman Catholic Synod, how we live with contradictory hopes. Right now, those contradictory hopes, those disagreements, appear to be stretching us to breaking point in different ways, and for different reasons, and to different degrees. Many of us have arrived at this Synod feeling weary, fearful, confused, even angry about it all.

There are those voices that I respect who tell me that, in trying to find a way of living with our disagreements, we are not only bound to fail, but will further hurt those who have already been hurt so much by the Church, and further alienate those who have lost confidence in the Church. I get that, but I am not sure we have the choice.

As I have said before, I dare to hope that, if we can tell a story of love and commitment to each other with our contradictory hopes, then that is a story that the world desperately needs to hear. So, dear sisters and brothers, dear friends, let us strive to see Jesus in each other as we speak to and about each other.

Addressing these issues at last year's Lambeth Conference, Archbishop Justin said to the assembled bishops, let us not treat each other lightly or carelessly. We are deeply divided, that will not end soon, but we are called by Christ himself both to truth and unity, and it is the same message for us. We are divided, and yet at the same time we are called to truth and unity. We are pulling apart from one another, and yet the reconciling God still draws us together.

So, secondly, might it be helpful to see where we do agree, for we agree that there should be no place for homophobia in our Church, that right across the breadth of our traditions we want our churches to be places of welcome for everyone. There is work to do on this because we disagree on the form that welcome should take.

Some want to go much further than LLF proposes, so that same-sex couples can be married in church. Others believe that even commending the prayers for private use is a step too far. But this agreement that we do have is a place to begin. So I do not intend to rehearse the deeply-held theological convictions which lie behind our different positions. I accept that faithful Christian people read and search the Scriptures, seek the guidance of the Spirit and pray earnestly to the Father, but arrive at different conclusions.

I do not know why this is. It would be easier and more straightforward if we all came to the same conclusions. But I want to notice what we hold in common, because it is so great and I am thankful for it, I see Jesus in it. For all of us, there will be lines we cannot cross. Faithfulness to the Gospel as we have seen it and received it really matters, though as William Blake put it, in a couplet that Rowan Williams described as horrifying, "The vision of Christ which thou dost see is my vision's greatest enemy".

With such conflict, I stand with Rowan Williams, who went on to say in this sermon that, in order to see Christ in each other in these situations, we have to turn to an authority that we both accept, which is, thirdly, the place where we need to see Jesus more than ever, upon the cross, the place wherefrom He sees us and breaks down the barriers between us.

In this, all of us will find ourselves having to make painful decisions, some compromises, and to love each other with greater fortitude and determination. Where we are right now is not where any of us would like to be, but I continue to believe that we can find a way of living in love and faith.

Furthermore, I stand by the statements I made in February. There will need to be some sort of provision, but just as the way forward that is being proposed is pastoral, and in my view does not mean a change in the Church of England's doctrine of Holy Matrimony, so I believe the reassurance and provision that we need should be pastoral. This is why I will be supporting the amendment being put forward by the Bishop of Oxford, because, as things stand, I am concerned that clergy using the commended prayers might find themselves vulnerable to a legal challenge if their use of the prayer looks to someone else to be a standalone service.

Something that allows standalone services for an experimental period seems to me to be a sensible and pastoral way forward. It gives clergy and parishes who want to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith* the legal protection they need, and because this will be on an opt-in basis, clergy and parishes who, in good conscience, will not use the prayers will be under no compunction or compulsion so to do, nor will they be disadvantaged in any way by their decision. We will, of course, need further discussions about how this provision continues to run through all that we are proposing.

I am sure the Bishop of London will say more about this when we get to that bit of our agenda. I also recognise that the pastoral guidance that is such a key component in this work should not be thought of as a fixed entity but a body of guidance that will evolve. But my purpose in this address is not to anticipate the debate, rather it is to ask us to lift our eyes above the debate to see Jesus, though even as I say this, I fear that some may hear it as a misuse of power, talking about seeing Jesus in LLF as a way of monopolising the spiritual high ground. Synod, that is not my intention.

For the last thing I want to say about seeing Jesus in LLF is seeing Jesus as judge, the one to whom we will all render account. I am really quite an orthodox Christian who believes unequivocally and unreservedly in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the need for repentance and amendment of life, who seeks to follow and live by Christ's teaching and who believes that Christ will come again.

Therefore, I know that one day I will have to give an account for my stewardship of God's Church. In my leading of the Church, where there is conscientious and Godly disagreement, I choose to err on the side of generosity, to err on the side of mercy. When I am in doubt, I seek to judge the tree by its fruits, and it is the fruit and the goodness and the faithfulness that I have seen in so many gay and lesbian Christian couples, not least so many faithful clergy, as I have also seen it in those who lead celibate lives and those who are married, that has led me to support the direction of travel that we, the whole Synod, supported in February.

But, for me, this must never be about winners and losers, for I am committed to the flourishing of the whole Church, but it will be together with our differences that we will be the Body of Christ. Therefore, we are not afforded the luxury of saying we do not need each other and I, for one, long to reach out to those who have been alienated and excluded from Christ's Body, the Church. I want them to see Jesus, and I not only believe we can walk together, I believe that by walking together, people will see Jesus better.

Therefore, I believe we will be a richer and better Church for *Living in Love and Faith* and with those provisions that will hold us together. But by richer, of course I mean poorer in spirit, less reliant on ourselves, more generous towards each other, richer in the mercy and goodness of God, who invites us all to come to Him, who prays that his Church will be one so that the world believes.

And dear friends, as we look to Jesus in each other, may we see what He requires of us, from the cross itself, which is to go on loving.

So my time, and this address is virtually up, but there is one last, important word to say, and it is a personal word to Bishop Sarah, who along with others, and most recently the new Bishop of Winchester, Bishop Philip, has devoted herself to the work of LLF over these past few years.

I know how difficult this has been and the toll it has taken. Her so often costly willingness to continue having difficult conversations in order to help us continue walking together and seeking, above all, to discern the will of God, has been, and is, an inspirational example of humble and persevering servant leadership.

I had not actually quite finished. So, Sarah, as you are about to pass the baton on after this Synod, we thank you for showing us what *Living in Love and Faith* looks like. Thank you.

The Chair: That concludes this item, I now hand over to the Chair of our next item of business, which will be the Business Committee Report.

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 2.32 pm

ITEM 3 REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2323)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We come to Item 3, the Business Committee Report. This is the opportunity for members to make brief points about the agenda and about other matters addressed in the Report by the Business Committee. For this item you will need GS 2323. I would like to ask the Chair of the Business Committee, Canon Robert Hammond, to speak to this item for up to 10 minutes.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Members will have realised that we do not use the November Synod dates very often, except if there is pressing business that needs to be dealt with, in this case *Living in Love and Faith* and the associated prayers. So the Business Committee is, as always, grateful to you for attending a November group of sessions, and especially to the staff for dealing with all the associated workload.

It is also good, as is now our custom, to be able to have some members joining us on Zoom, and we are very grateful to the technicians who make Zoom, the livestream and the IT here in the chamber talk to each other. If you are joining on Zoom, please make sure that you have read the email that Lumi has sent out and you have the emergency support details to hand.

You will have noticed that today's agenda is a little unusual, and that is the agenda for today. We start with a formal sitting of Synod, which will run through to after Questions; we then seamlessly morph into an informal session on *Living in Love and Faith* for about an hour-and-a-quarter, and that will be explained at the time. For the avoidance of doubt, we will be keeping the livestream running during that time on this occasion.

At about a quarter past six, we will re-morph back, if that is the right description, to a full and formal session of Synod to deal with reappointing the Chair of the Pensions Board before evening worship, which you are encouraged to stay for.

From then on, Tuesday and Wednesday, we will be in formal group of session mode, but LLF is not the only item on our agenda, although unsurprisingly, as Archbishop Stephen said, it will take the bulk of our time, and it is the reason that we are meeting this November. We will be considering an aspect of safeguarding, the Redress Measure, and I understand that the Bishop of Winchester will be saying something about the process for that during the debate.

After the Church's Conservation Trust Order, and considering proposed changes to our own Standing Orders, we will devote most of the remaining time to LLF. The Business Committee has allowed a very considerable amount of time for this item, noting that we did underestimate how much time would be required in February.

If it takes the around nine hours that we have notionally allowed, which it did in February, well and good. If it takes less time, then we will move to the contingency business indicated, so please be prepared for and aware of that. Now, we did think very hard about which items of contingency business we should take, and we decided on those that are at the end of our agenda.

This may well mean that, unusually, next February, we do not take all the contingency items held over from this group of sessions, because, as you will see from the forward look, the business for February is already looking extremely full.

The Business Committee has reflected on July's group of sessions, and we are extremely grateful for the feedback that members provided. With several thousand separate comments, we cannot hope to address or respond to each separately, but we do spend a considerable amount of time looking at suggestions and themes, and you may notice some changes as a result.

One of them is that we now have height-adjustable podiums. There is a little button on the front of the two podiums here so you can raise or lower the podium.

One theme which was frequently raised was around the use of Standing Orders during debates, so a couple of points about that.

Firstly, if you do raise a point of order in a debate, you should indicate which point of order you are raising and let the Chair of the debate then guide you in how to proceed. Secondly, it is always a good idea, if you can, to discuss with the registrars or the administrators, through the Clerk, any point of order that you wish to raise. They are able to offer impartial advice on the best way of achieving what you want to achieve. I accept that will not always be possible, but it may prevent you asking for something which simply cannot be done.

We have allowed the now regular two Question Time sessions, to allow for as many questions to be answered as we can, however members are asking more questions, which is not necessarily a bad thing, and the Business Committee will continue to look at the balance of time that we allow for them. Unfortunately, I continue to receive complaints by members about other members' behaviour and words both in and around Synod, and on social media.

We are continuing to work through the important work we started in July about a Synod complaints procedure, and, again, we are extremely grateful to members for engaging with us on that. But in the meantime, can I again remind Synod to be careful about what you say and, perhaps more importantly, how you say it, both within the chamber and on social media?

Your clarity of view may be interpreted as not showing love to everybody. Your interpretation and understanding of Scripture may not be shared by others, and your robust argument may be seen as rude and bullying by some. And please remember that you can only speak for yourself, especially on social media, so be careful when you use the Synod hashtag.

And whilst on the subject of social media, I know many members use it whilst here, and many of you have an ability to multi-task in a way that, perhaps, I could in my youth but not in my dotage, and I urge you to pay attention to the speeches and proceedings in the chamber and not just to your Twitter - sorry, X - feed and WhatsApp groups.

You may also see the press gallery quite full this week, which is a reminder that we are being filmed, recorded and broadcast, so if you are speaking, it is wise to remember, especially if you are on Zoom, you are not just talking to the 400 or so people in this room, you but potentially many, many more.

We all have read, I hope, Notice Paper 5 on decorum and practice in the chamber. The Business Committee feels it is important that the customs and practice continue to be observed, and encourage you to note them and act accordingly. You will note particularly our custom is to stand when the platform party enters at the start of each group of sessions, and to acknowledge the Chair when leaving and entering the chamber during a session, and our custom to receive the results of all votes in silence.

You will also, hopefully, have read Notice Paper 6 about worship and pastoral support. We hope that you will stay in the chamber for evening prayer after our business, and we are very grateful to the Revd Dylan Turner and all those involved for arranging this for us. Although we are a legislative body, we are also a praying one, and worship is vital to our life together.

I would also like to mention and thank the extended pastoral support that is in place this Synod. We are very grateful to those who have offered their time to be part of a wider chaplaincy team from a variety of different Church backgrounds, so that members are able to speak to someone with whom they feel comfortable. This was very much appreciated in February, and we are pleased to offer it again. The chaplains can be identified by their green Synod passes, and will be based in the chapel here in Church House, and if you are joining remotely then please contact Synod support.

I would just like to say something about the February 2024 group of Sessions. As I mentioned, we already have a lot of items we need to consider for inclusion on the agenda in February, and the Business Committee will have to make some hard decisions about what we include. We just cannot give time to everything. On the timing of dates for February, we expect to start on Friday 23 February and end on Tuesday 27 February, although we will confirm exact timings after our agenda-setting meeting later this month. The decision to try the weekend session was agreed in the last quinquennium, and we will review it afterwards.

And finally, Chair, I would like to, on behalf of all Synod, thank you and your colleagues on the Panel of Chairs, especially the new faces we will see in your seat in this group of sessions, all the staff and especially the Clerk and her team, those who come to help from different parts of the National Church Institutions and all the staff here in Church House for all they do for us and for the Church.

Chair, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: For this item, I just want to remind members of a few things. Amendments to the motion are not in order, nor are any further motions arising out of the Report. I am going to be firm with members who do not confine their speeches strictly to the shape and content of the agenda. 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. Thank you.

So I open this for debate. I call Ed Shaw and Eleanor Robertshaw, and your speech limit is three minutes.

Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol): Firstly, a huge thank you to the Business Committee for all they do to serve us. One of the things they mention in their Report is lack of trust, and I wonder

what they could do to help us as we struggle as members with the lack of information that has been presented to us.

Back in February, and then again in July, we were promised full *Pastoral Guidance* to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality*, and, again, we come to Synod and we do not have that full *Pastoral Guidance*. That is especially troubling when there is such a deficit of trust in this room. Is there anything that the Business Committee can do to make sure that what we are promised we will receive is received, so that votes that we make in this place are made with the most information that we have to hand?

And especially when it comes to *Pastoral Guidance*, I think we are all aware that it sort of exists, and it has been voted on privately. Those of us in this place who have been called to vote on these matters publicly could really benefit from having all the information that, at the moment, is just private and is not being transparently shared.

The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield): Thank you to the Business Committee for all your hard work, I know that it is not an easy task. The question that I ask here today is really directed to all of us here at Synod. Do we really think that we can justify over 10 hours scheduled for one topic? Do we really think that calling a November Synod will be worthwhile?

While I know the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are really important, especially to those who are currently not fully acknowledged in the Church of England, we also note the lack of progress, and the fact that, despite 10 hours' worth of timetabled business here, it is unlikely that we will get anything further than the same arguments that were rehearsed in February.

This debate of *Prayers of Love and Faith* is an inward-facing debate. How does this look to our wider society? How does it look to the people up there in the press gallery? This Synod is going to have cost a fortune. The hotels are an outrageous cost, hours of work is being lost in parishes and many people will have had to take annual leave to be here today. What is the point if we are going over old ground?

While we sit in this Synod, we are, and I say this to myself as well, in a bit of a middle-class bubble. Many of our churches will be supporting those while we are here, who are struggling financially and welcoming the help of food banks. Those who are worried about where their next meal will come from do not have the luxury of a time to debate. While we are here today, there are people not far from us living on the streets in what our now thankfully former Home Secretary called a "lifestyle choice". They do not have the luxury of time for debates as they will be thinking where they will lay their head tonight.

While we ponder here, people around the world are facing violence and danger of death. They do not have headspace for debate, they are too busy trying to stay alive.

We are the established Church, we have the immense privilege of being able to use our prophetic Christian voice in a wider society, and yet, at this moment, we are using our time to bicker and fall out. What I would like us to do as a Synod is to look back to what God calls us to be, and He calls us to be people who make a difference, not to be people who are inward-focused.

The Chair: I would like to call Jennifer Fellows, and then I will be changing the speech limit to two minutes.

Mrs Jennifer Fellows (Gloucester): Firstly, let me thank the Business Committee for all the work they have done in gathering feedback from the last group of sessions. I was happy to see that, in the Business Committee Report, the feedback showed that some members felt the same people were being called repeatedly to speak. This is my first quinquennium, and I feel that reflects my experience of Synod.

In fact, I have actually invented a game for Synod that I play - Synod bingo. When reading a paper, I usually at the top jot down four or five members who I think will be called to speak, and I have to say my success rate is pretty good. In July, we had the most fantastic debate about youth representation on Synod, and we heard passionate speeches from around this chamber about the desire to hear a wide range of views from a diverse group of people, so let us ensure that happens. Especially in this group of sessions, can we hear from the voices we have not heard before?

Can I ask the Business Committee to let our Chairs know, who are fantastic, that no one is going to be offended by being pointed at or being described by their clothing. I mean, my photo is pre-baby Jennifer, and I looked very, very different. So, in this group of sessions, and moving forward in Synod, please help me to lose a round of Synod bingo. Please call on people that we have not heard from before, and thank you to the Business Committee for raising this in your Report.

The Chair: Can I call Mark Miller and Andrew Cornes?

The Chair imposed a speech limit of two minutes.

The Revd Mark Miller (Durham): I am grateful to the Business Committee for all that they do, and I too would like to speak to paragraph 6 in their Report about names and people being called. By my reckoning, in July some members were called seven times to speak, others five times to speak, across the debates. If you were on Zoom, I suspect your chances of being called to speak were almost 100%. Now, I am not criticising anybody at all, particularly our Chairs, it is a very, very hard job that they do.

The official guidance is to fill in a request to speak and to stand or otherwise indicate your desire to speak. The unofficial advice is to wear something distinctive and sit in the eyeline of the Chair. I believe one of our Synod colleagues this week has packed a purple fedora and a lime green boa for this group of sessions. Another has spent years

cultivating a generous beard, another has packed a false beard, but he also forgot his trousers, so let us not go there.

As funny as this may be, it is not seemly and does not generate good debate, and I want to suggest an alternative. We used to walk through these doors to indicate our votes. We have handsets and voting cards, why can these not be used to indicate our desire to speak? The same method could be used across our hybrid meetings, the same method could be used if we are choosing to speak for or against the debate and a simple, random algorithm could assist our Chairs in taking speakers across the three Houses so that we have a good debate with new speakers being called.

So, whilst I will miss hearing the Chair invite the person in the brightly coloured hat or, yes, you with the generous beard, to speak, perhaps a contemporary way of drawing lots would make for far better debates.

The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester): These sessions will be closely watched by Britain's media and the Anglican Communion. And one phrase from Scripture has been with me - speaking the truth in love. Many of us have strong views on Christian sexual morality. We need to hear the stories of rejection that the Church, in the past, was deaf to. We hear them best when they are spoken gently and in love.

We need to hear from those who believe what the Church has held for 2,000 years, their stories of being silenced. We hear them best when they are spoken kindly and in love. And the Scriptures tell us to speak the truth in love. Our Church of England says repeatedly it is supremely in Scripture that the truth is to be found. The great councils of the Church hammered out their teaching by listening to the meaning of Scripture, and yet in our debates we have so rarely heard Scripture explained and different understandings given.

So may we hear especially from Christ and the New Testament writers, and our different interpretations of them? I am speaking to myself; I want to speak the truth in love.

The Chair: I call Thomas Seville and then I am going to look to Zoom, I see somebody indicating.

The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities): I echo my thanks and my admiration for the skill of the Business Committee in preparing this agenda in such difficult circumstances as we find ourselves in. Members have commented on the need for courtesy and for minding what we say. That is very good to hear. The last February and the last July Synod were extremely difficult, and I speak as somebody, among a small minority here, I think, who remembers the debates on the ordination of women to the episcopate.

This is worse. However, it is not just courtesy. Following on from what Andrew has just said about listening to Scripture, there is a text from Scripture quoted in those long-ago

debates on the ordination of women to the episcopate, by the then Bishop of Aston. It is from 2 Samuel 21:3. I am sure you all know it. It is David responding to a request from the Gibeonites, and the result will be really quite brutal, but the heart of his message I think is something we need to hear.

You will find various translations, mine is from the combination of Lexham and Living Bible translations. And David says to the Gibeonites “What can I do for you, and how can I make amends and induce you to ask God to bless us?” Is it possible to hope that somebody who is fervently convinced that the message of God is clear in Scriptures about same-sex relationships, for example, and somebody who is equally clear that justice calls us to have equal matrimony, if I can use the word, is it possible for them to try and construe in this Synod what it would be for the other side, and there is more than one side, to do something so that God blesses them?

The Chair: We turn to Zoom. I call Clive Billenness.

Mr Clive Billenness (Europe): Members, how Synod creates a permanent record of what we said and did matters, because history is waiting to judge us. On paragraph 28 of the Business Committee’s Report, which refers to the transcript of our July session, I would just like to quickly express some disappointment that the report on business done on Sunday 9 July, which is on page 13 of this very extensive document, does not provide any context before reporting that the Synod was adjourned at 4.19 pm.

And while I accept that what occurs during an adjournment does not form part of the record of business done, the Synod was in session, and I proposed to allow members of the Independent Safeguarding Board to reply to what had been said about them in the preceding item. I am personally deeply grateful to the Chair of that session for eventually finding a way to accede to my request, but I think a little more detail would have been helpful.

The Chair: I would just like to test the mind of Synod on whether this item has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 3.

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

The Chair: So I now call on the Chair of the Business Committee, Robert Hammond, to reply.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Thank you to everybody who contributed to that debate. Ed Shaw, I do not think that there is anything that the Business Committee can do about releasing information, but the House of Bishops will have heard what you said. Eleanor, the Business Committee responds to the business that the Synod has agreed, we do not actually set the business, if you see what I mean.

Whether it is a good use of our time, and whether it comes back for more discussion, is up to you, the Synod, and I would note that the Business Committee had in our mind a shorter amount of time in February for the LLF debate than Synod ended up using, so we have erred on the side of caution in our agenda this time to match that.

Jennifer and Mark, Jennifer, you are not the first member to have played General Synod bingo, I can assure you of that. Many of us have. The Chairs decide who to call, and although we do give them your feedback, it is the Chair's decision on who is called.

However, they are all members of Synod and they will have heard exactly what you have said. And, Mark, yes, let us have a quick chat about what some of those options could be and some of the challenges around that.

Andrew, thank you. Synod members will have heard what you said and I am sure that we all want to speak the truth in love.

Clive on Zoom, the ISB item was at that point outside of Synod so a transcript is not taken of that because it was outside of a formal sitting, I am afraid.

Other than that, thank you for your contributions to that debate. As ever, the Business Committee is grateful to you and will welcome your continued feedback, which we do look at. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair: I now put this item to the vote.

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

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Chair: That item is carried. Thank you very much. We now move to the next item which is a presentation of two petitions. Mr Sam Margrave has given notice of his desire to present two petitions in accordance with Standing Order 43.

Mr Margrave, you may speak for two minutes on each petition. Members cannot speak or vote on this. Once the presentation has happened, the petitions stand referred to the Business Committee. May I invite Sam Margrave to speak to his petitions.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Synod, it is with great sadness I present this petition, as it highlights concerning aspects of the Primate of All England's leadership. This petition raises questions about Archbishop Justin Welby's judgment and commitment to safeguarding. I urge Synod to consider the evidence and impact on the Church's credibility and safeguarding responsibilities.

Archbishop Welby's connections to individuals involved in abuse cases, such as John Smyth and the Revd Michael Pilavachi, cast shadows onto the association and judgment,

as does the Archbishop meeting Peter Tatchell, known for controversial views on the age of consent. Mr Tatchell, for example, saying that “not all sex involving children is unwanted, abusive or harmful”. There are also accusations that the Archbishop failed to report a priest accused of sexual assault which compounds these concerns.

Despite previous promises to improve, that has not happened. ISB members have raised criticism, including with the resignation of Meg Munn, who said she was undermined.

We therefore ask the Archbishop of York to write to His Majesty the King and share the evidence contained in this petition to recommend the removal or resignation of the Archbishop, to examine the reputational and safeguarding implications, to report findings to Synod and ensure that safeguarding decisions in the past that have been taken are reviewed. We need a new Archbishop to restore trust in our Church. (Cries of “shame”.)

The Chair: Can you speak to your second petition? Thank you.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): At the General Synod in July 2023 during Question number 12, the Archbishop of Canterbury was explicitly asked in a supplementary question how the Presidents and Archbishops voted in respect of disbanding the Independent Safeguarding Board. In response, Justin Welby implied that he and Stephen Cottrell did not vote for the ISB proposals to disband or remove members, saying they wanted to wait. The Archbishop of York did not contradict the statement. The video of the Archbishop’s answer and question asked is available online. However, it later came to light that all members of the Archbishops’ Council unanimously voted to disband the ISB.

Honesty by members of Synod when answering questions is critical for good governance and the Nolan Principles set out why honesty matters. This petition therefore asks for a statement to be made by the Presidents to General Synod regarding this matter that action is undertaken by the Secretary General and the Business Committee to investigate and establish the truth by bringing in a judge or KC to investigate these allegations and, if upheld, the Business Committee disciplines the Archbishops and requests the record be corrected and an apology made to this Synod. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 43(4) the petition will be available for inspection by members at the information desk. Thank you.

I would like to close this item and we move to the next item of business. Thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 3.07 pm

ITEM 4 QUESTIONS

The Chair: Members of Synod, we come now to Questions. You will need your Questions Notice Paper, which you would have all received by email and which you may wish to refer to as we proceed with the item. You will also need the Eighth Notice Paper, where we will find the correct answers to Question 56 and Question 64.

We have over 200 questions, members, and so to assist us in responding to as many of these questions as possible, I would like to suggest that we exercise some self-restraint and self-discipline by not thinking that we have to respond to every question with a supplementary. In the light of this, please be aware that I will not be calling the first person who shouts “supplementary”. I will of course be giving priority to the original questioner, so if you are not the original questioner, do choose which question you really, really need to speak to.

You also have notes for members on your supplementary questions. I would however like to highlight a few things. First of all, this session is as it says; it is for questions. It is not expecting there will be a debate, so therefore no preamble to questions. When you stand please simply ask the question. No argument or imputation, in other words, no one should be accused of wrongdoing or reprehensible behaviour. Not asking for an expression of opinion or a solution to a hypothetical problem. And supplementary questions must be relevant to the original question or to the answer being given.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

The Chair: We come now to questions 1 to 93 on the LLF to the House of Bishops and the Bishop of London will be replying.

1. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Apart from the Synod vote in February 2023 and the LLF responses, representing probably less than 1% of worshipping members of the Church of England, what evidence do the Bishops have to suggest that the majority of members of the Church of England support the commendation of the prayers of blessing?

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 *Living in Love and Faith* (LLF) motion that was brought to Synod in February 2023 represented the outcome of probably the biggest consultation and listening exercise the Church of England has ever undertaken, details of which can be found on the *Living in Love and Faith* Hub or through the national Church of England website.

As a result of that motion being passed, the House of Bishops has been asked by Synod to further refine, commend and issue the *Prayers of Love and Faith* (PLF). They have also been asked to monitor the Church’s use of, and response to, the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, once they have been commended and published. There is a commitment in GS 2328 to do this.

Dr Simon Eyre: Thank you for your answer. I am very appreciative of that. May I clarify a question? What evidence do the Bishops currently have of substantive support for the commendation of the Prayers of Blessing amongst the vast majority of people who have not undertaken LLF?

The Bishop of London: I think I would refer back to February's Synod. Actually, I think there are members within Synod who have not undertaken LLF and also members of Synod who are in contact with people who have not. The motion back in February 2023 talked about the *Prayers of Love and Faith* being commended.

Wendy Coombey (Hereford): Bishop Sarah, are you aware of any studies, polls or research from the last few years that indicate that a majority of the Church of England are opposed to the liturgical acclamation of same-sex relationships? Is any of that research available?

The Bishop of London: I think I would point you to there have been some secular surveys done recently. I am sure you are aware. I think *The Times* was one of them. There are some and, of course, the House of Bishops is aware of those as well

2. *Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: If the formal authorization of services for same-sex couples is now agreed to be subject to Canon B 2, what benefits do the Bishops consider will result from waiting until 2025 for a vote on this matter?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The third section of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* contains the forms of service to be used for separate, standalone services for same-sex couples. As stated in GS 2328, following the Canon B 2 process for these services will provide the firmest footing for those using them within the shortest possible timeframe. Synodical authorization for these forms of service entails preparing the material for authorization through the stages of liturgical business as set out in Annex G, GS 2328, which is why a final vote under B 2 cannot be held before 2025.

Dr Simon Eyre: Thank you again, Sarah, for your reply. Would the Bishops consider initiating a vote of Synod requiring a two-thirds majority at this time to test the principle of whether the use of formal services for same-sex couples would attract sufficient support to justify prolonging the process for another two years?

The Bishop of London: Sorry, could you repeat your question?

Dr Simon Eyre: Would the Bishops consider initiating a vote of Synod requiring a two-thirds majority to be taken at this stage to determine whether the principle of use of formal services would attract sufficient support in Synod?

The Bishop of London: No.

3. *Mrs Christina Baron (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 talks of providing services of covenanted friendship. May the research underlying this proposal, the theology behind it and the evidence of any pastoral demand for such services be shared with Synod?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A short explanation of covenanted friendships can be found in the *Pastoral Guidance*, section 1.2.6. Desire for such prayers was expressed at various points in the LLF process, with particular requests for attending to friendship as a discrete category and a different place of belonging from other types of relationships.

The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEIs): Thank you, Bishop Sarah. A covenant is a profound thing. Has any thought been given to how you end or dissolve a covenanted friendship? Are they for life? Sorry, that was two questions.

The Bishop of London: No, it has not.

4. *Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In February 2023, General Synod voted and asked the Bishops to further refine the *Prayers of Love and Faith* in a manner not contrary to, nor indicative of being contrary to, the doctrine of the Church of England.

Mindful that much of the media coverage suggests that these prayers “bless same-sex marriages”, and mindful that many members of the public rely on media coverage for information, can the Bishop state exactly what research and “stress testing” has been done to assess public perception of the proposed prayers, so that Synod may be confident that they will not be perceived as being indicative of a change in doctrine?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whenever we issue prayers, liturgy or a statement, various interpretations and misinterpretations will potentially abound, and it is not possible, nor desirable, to control these. Media coverage, in particular headlines, does sometimes oversimplify or misdescribe what the Church is doing, and our Communications Team make considerable efforts to provide clear and accurate explanations to the media. The *Prayers of Love and Faith*, as well as the notes that accompany them, and the *Pastoral Guidance* make it clear that they are not a marriage service, or a Thanksgiving for Marriage or A Service of Prayer and Dedication after Civil Marriage. In Commending the PLF Resource Section with the *Pastoral Guidance*, the Bishops are also saying that they believe they do not contradict the doctrine of the Church. Consideration has been given at all stages of developing these resources of the public perception of what they contain, both in terms of the services and in the pastoral care of couples that ask for the prayers. This has involved an iterative process of refinement of the contents from pastoral, theological and legal perspectives.

Mrs Sandie Turner: Thank you for your answer. Bishop Sarah, if I have understood correctly, whilst consideration was given to public perception of the prayers, no specific research was carried out to gauge it accurately, in which case will the Bishops undertake to conduct research to assess public perception of the prayers by asking both churchgoers and non-churchgoers, and then will the Bishops commit to bring those findings to Synod as soon as possible?

The Bishop of London: Thank you for your question. The prayers have been around now since February. We got feedback from Synod. I think over 600 people responded and overwhelmingly it was positive. The comment I would give again is there have been surveys in the public, for example I think *The Times* said positively people wanted prayers of blessing, and I think we had feedback in that way, but we are not commissioning anything further.

5. *Ms Fiona MacMillan (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that for more than 20 years priests have been the sole decision-makers with respect to granting exceptions to Canon B 30 for those remarrying after divorce, and that this has been largely uncontroversial, on what basis was it decided that the provision of prayers for the relationship of a same-sex couple would not follow the same procedure of the local priest's decision?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Marriage in church of divorcees does not involve making an exception to Canon B 30. In July 2002, the General Synod affirmed "in accordance with the doctrine of the Church of England as set out in Canon B 30, that marriage should always be undertaken as a 'solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman'". Legal advice provided by the senior ecclesiastical judges and the Synod's legal advisers was that the Canon "did not clearly prohibit further marriage but was ambiguous, being capable of being understood as allowing it".

Prayers for same-sex couples involve different considerations from marriage after divorce. The rationale for involving Parochial Church Councils in decisions about use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* is set out in GS 2328 and is summarised as being "to ascertain that use of the prayers will be supported generally in the church concerned".

Ms Fiona McMillan: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer. Did the Synod vote in 2002, which allowed remarriage following divorce, require a change in the doctrine of marriage?

The Bishop of London: I think what I will do, Fiona, is respond to you in writing, if that is all right.

6. *Mr Sam Wilson (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: With which qualitative and quantitative metrics do the House of Bishops plan to measure the success of the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* Resource Section that they plan to commend?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are no standard metrics for measuring the use of liturgical materials. There is the intention, as stated in GS 2328, to consult with dioceses on the prayers, but how this consultation will be conducted has not been defined yet.

7. *Ms Sammi Tooze (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What provision exists in the *Book of Common Prayer*, or authorized under Canon B 2 for a minister who wishes to ask for God's blessing on a same-sex couple?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Ministers who wish to incorporate prayers for a same-sex couple in a service according to the *Book of Common Prayer* could make use of the widely accepted practice of including intercessory prayers after the third Collect at Morning or Evening Prayer according to the *Book of Common Prayer*, being "variations which are not of substantial importance" to those services (Canon B 5.1). In a similar way, the minister could make provision for special prayers of intercession at a service of Holy Communion or at a Service of the Word (*Common Worship*). The *Prayers of Love and Faith* are provided for such occasions.

8. *Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* contain phrases such as "to follow the way of holiness revealed in your Son Jesus Christ", "walking before you in holiness and righteousness", and "uniting our wills in your will". As the doctrine of the Church, (which remains unchanged), is that marriage is between one man and one woman, and that this is the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy, the use of these phrases highlights the need for repentance and celibacy outside of this context. In the light of this, what rubric will be included with these prayers to ensure that they are not indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church, and thus are able to "glorify God and edify the people"?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Prayers of Love and Faith* are not a form of marriage service, nor do they equate the relationships brought before God to Holy Matrimony. Nevertheless, they recognise all that is good, and holy, and faithful in these relationships and enable the people in these relationships to place themselves before God and ask for God's blessing for their journey of love and faith. The *Pastoral Guidance* provides detailed advice on preparation with a couple asking for the prayers. This includes the advice that "the overall ethos of the PLF is to help a couple grow in holiness with the help of the church around them, praying for them, where holiness is a goal to work towards rather than something already owned, as indeed is the case for all human beings".

9. *Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the draft prayers for Covenanted Friendships, given that friendship can be between two or more people, what is the rationale for referring to the friends as a “couple” rather than “friends”?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The draft *Pastoral Guidance* (at 1.2.6) refers to the decision of “two friends who wish to express their mutual love and loyalty before God”. However, in subsequent iterations “friends” will replace “couple”.

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): For those who wish to enter into covenanted friendship, that would sit alongside marital views. How would it work with the vow to forsake all others?

The Bishop of London: I think the Prayers for Covenanted Friendships came out of a request, so I think the work recognises that we have a range of different relationships, and actually the *Love Matters* Report talked about singleness as well, recognising that particularly those who are single will have significant relations that are not sexual but want to recognise them. I think we also have to think about relationships such as David and Jonathan in the Bible and Ruth and Naomi. That is really where it comes from. Who knows who will want to use it, but my expectation is if there is somebody already in a marriage they would certainly spend time talking to their partner about it and I think it would be between them.

The Chair: I am just looking on Zoom. I believe Ruth Allan had her hand up on Zoom. Ruth, if you are still there, would you like to respond?

Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford): Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for answering my question. Following on from the last supplementary, what care will need to be undertaken, as mentioned in the draft *Pastoral Guidance*, to identify the nature of the Covenant and how this will impact on other friendships, particularly where, for example, a married person is one of the friends who requests prayer? What will this careful need to undertake this aspect look like, please?

The Bishop of London: One of my real joys is to be able to share ministry alongside parish priests, and the thing I know is that they are so good at pastoral questions, and therefore, I have every confidence in a parish priest who is approached for this for them to ask exactly the right questions, so my confidence is in the priests of the Church of England.

The Chair: I am sorry, we have had two supplementary questions already so we move on to Question 10.

10. *Mr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The provision of the current suite of *Prayers of Love and Faith* now appears to be predicated on our being

“in a time of uncertainty”. In the discussion of the House, what was this “uncertainty” understood to be concerning - the possibility of a change in the Church’s doctrine of marriage, or some other question, and if the former, what will be the status of the prayers (and those who use them) should the Church’s doctrine of marriage not in fact change?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The nature of a “time of uncertainty” is explored in Annex H of GS 2328, pp. 3-4. LLF was a process of discernment about our theology, our pastoral frameworks and how we relate to one another, in the area of sexuality and marriage. The outcome of several years of discernment is not a clear majority for change, nor is it a clear majority for no change. As a result, the PLF and accompanying work have sought to explore the widest possible space we can occupy as a Church without changing our doctrine of marriage, while being faithful to the desire for change and the need to embody repentance for the way in which LGBTQI+ people have been treated. As such, the PLF do not represent a change in doctrine, but a change in how doctrine and pastoral practice relate to one another. Pastoral provision seeks to offer a theological space that affirms what we can affirm together - such as essential goods or virtues - but remains provisional on what we disagree on, and recognises that different churches and ministers will interpret these things in different ways.

Mr Andrew Bell: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer clarifying that uncertainty is not over our doctrine of marriage but, may I say, our direction of travel. On what basis did the House decide to use the term “uncertainty” rather than, it would seem, a more accurate description such as “profound division”?

The Bishop of London: It is interesting. I think some of the stuff the House of Bishops and the College have been doing since February, and before that in fact, is actually theology and recognising that there are differences in our understanding of Scripture, and therefore that debate and discussion has been going on. The term “uncertainty”, I think there is some tradition around that and also the recognition that it is not about my uncertainty or your uncertainty, because you are probably pretty certain, but it about the Church; that we are not in agreement.

We talk about disagreement, and we talk about that difference in what we view, but our sense as a House is actually what we are trying to do is to seek to be unified under Christ. That discussion around theology has been about graciousness, to listen. Therefore, that sense of being in a time of uncertainty and pastoral provision reflects, I think, our desire that, despite our differences, we are trying to seek a way forward at this time to occupy a space and to seek to be unified under Christ.

11. *Miss Debbie Woods (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that the Legal Office has said that the legality of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* cannot be assured without sight of the full *Pastoral Guidance*, on what grounds has the House of Bishops commended these prayers as having secure legal status?

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 relevant to the Prayers of Love and Faith is contained in parts 1 and 2 of Annex E of GS 2328. Part 3 - the part of the guidance which has not been completed - is not material to consideration of the Prayers. It is important to note that the PLF have not been formally commended yet, but will be after the meeting of General Synod. A formal announcement will be made to mark the date at which they are formally commended.

Miss Debbie Woods: Thank you for your answer. On what basis did the House consider that the Synod would be able to evaluate the House's proposals without access to the legal advice that the House has seen?

The Bishop of London: This is in terms of the *Pastoral Guidance*? The *Pastoral Guidance*

The Chair: Can I ask you to pause for a moment? I am afraid that that is not relevant to this particular question so we will not have that, thank you.

12. *The Revd Mark Wallace (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In GS 2328, Annex A paragraph 3 states: "Such a service should not have the PLF as their principal focus or structure". What rubric or guidance will be given in order to determine whether or not this criterion has been fulfilled; and if it is not, is such a service in danger of being indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As page 1 of Annex C indicates, the material in the Resource Section will be commended for use as part of a regular service, that is, a service which would take place whether or not the PLF material were to be used. Such a service should not have the PLF as their principal focus or structure. The suggestions for using them in appropriate contexts may be found in the draft *Pastoral Guidance* and in the general norms for regulating public worship.

Some authorized forms of service make their own provision for the use of prayers and other material at the discretion of the minister: for example, the prayers of intercession at the Holy Communion where "other suitable words may be used", or at a Service of the Word where the Prayers may include "petitions of intercession, litanies, thanksgivings and other forms of *ex tempore* prayer". Other authorized forms of service may have prayers inserted; for instance, intercessory prayers after the third Collect at Morning or Evening Prayer according to the *Book of Common Prayer*.

13. *The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What steps are required for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* to be commended, and which of those steps have already been taken?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Many of the steps to commending the PLF have been completed in the work that has already been done with the House of Bishops. We will be commending the PLF and issuing Parts 1 and 2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* before the end of the year.

The Revd Martin Poole: Is the commending of these prayers and issuing of Parts 1 and 2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* dependent on this General Synod session voting at this session to encourage the House of Bishops to continue its work of implementation?

The Bishop of London: The House has agreed to commend the Prayers. We hope to be able to commend them in mid-December with the *Pastoral Guidance*. Of course, we want to listen to Synod's reflections on it and I look forward to the debate over the next couple of days. I could probably say that legally it is not dependent on the Synod.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Just following on from that. If I have understood Bishop Sarah correctly, even if the motion on Item 7 were defeated, or if it were amended to ask the Bishops not to commend, they still plan to go ahead and do so?

The Bishop of London: I think if the motion were passed not to commend, we clearly would have to listen to it. I think if the motion fell we would have to listen to what Synod had said.

14. *The Revd Neil Barber (Derby) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* What changes have been made to the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* in light of the Cornes amendment being passed in February?

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 PLF as brought to the meeting of the February Synod were not intended to change the doctrine of marriage, and, as a result, no amendments were needed in response to the Cornes amendment. The Implementation Group responsible for the *Prayers* did consider the extensive feedback from the Synod group work undertaken in the February 2023 group of sessions and made a number of changes based on that feedback and other inputs.

The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn): Given that no revisions to the *Prayers* were made in the light of the Cornes amendment, how was the direction of the House of Bishops' work specifically impacted by that addition of the amendment to the motion that they brought in February?

The Bishop of London: The reason I accepted the amendment was because we said in all the documents that we produced in February 2023 that we were not seeking to change the doctrine of marriage. That was why I accepted the amendment.

I think it is fair to say that the space in which the House of Bishops was occupied was shaped by that. Therefore, whilst the *Prayers* themselves did not change, because the *Prayers* were written with the intention of not, I think, the way in which we shaped the *Pastoral Guidance* sections 1 and 2 did alter in terms of giving greater clarity around that space.

The Chair: I believe I heard another voice. Please go ahead.

Professor Helen King (Oxford): Would it be true, following what you said, Bishop Sarah, that the Cornes amendment confirmed what the House of Bishops had already stated regarding the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and therefore did not materially affect the proposals put forward by the House?

The Bishop of London: Yes.

15. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Theological rationale for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* that they are “*pastoral provision for a time of uncertainty*” appears to be completely novel compared to the rationale offered for the *Prayers* in February. Where has this rationale originated, and what role has the FAOC had in developing this?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Theological rationale builds on the work that had been done on blessing previously, which can be found on the LLF Hub, as well as drawing on the history of pastoral provision or accommodation within the Church of England. In this sense, it is not novel, but works within the framework of pastoral theology, and the consideration of how doctrine interacts with pastoral practice. Legal work was also done in February, based on the relationship between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony. Legal and theological work are different in nature, though they are interrelated.

The LLF Steering Group oversaw the production of the theological rationale. The chair of the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) sits on the Steering Group, as does its secretary, but the rationale itself is not a FAOC document.

Mrs Mary Durlacher: Given that Synod wants to make the most informed decision, and we are grateful that you want to listen to Synod, could we please be given the contents or some indication of the FAOC’s deliberations and how they have influenced this proposal?

The Bishop of London: The papers that you have before you in GS 2328 are based on the advice that the House discussed, so that is in those documents.

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford): Thank you for confirming that the proposed theological rationale Annex H is not a FAOC document. Perhaps to be more explicit,

FAOC has not seen it before it has been published, so where has the theological proposal been scrutinised and peer reviewed and stress-tested?

The Bishop of London: I suppose since 2017 we have had a process of listening to Scripture, listening to God and listening to the Church. Since 2017, there has been a whole range of theological views taken, and part of that has included FAOC members. Certainly the documents that we have put together have involved individual members of FAOC, as they have a range of other people, so there is no doubt there have been individuals that have scrutinised those documents.

16. *The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Which of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are new, and which are drawn from existing liturgy, and which of these are drawn from liturgy which is currently commended for use in relation to the celebration of marriage, and in the latter case, what rubrics will be required to clarify that the use of such prayers in a new context is not indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A table of sources will be posted on the Synod noticeboard.

It is intended that the PLF Resource Section be commended for use by the minister in private prayer and in regular forms of public worship, exercising their discretion under Canon B 5. Both the introduction to Annex C and the *Pastoral Guidance* (i.e. at 1.2.1) indicate that, like all prayers in public worship, intercessions including materials from the PLF Resource Section should be such that they are not, as presented and in the given liturgical context, “contrary to, or indicative of a departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter”. This is true whether the chosen prayers are newly written for the PLF or drawn from existing material.

The Revd Canon John Bavington: Given the weight that it feels like is being placed on the phrase “in any essential matter” in relation to possible departure from doctrine, I wonder has the House considered the meaning of that phrase “in any essential matter” and the boundaries that lie around it? If so, what conclusion did it reach?

The Bishop of London: Yes, the House has had a discussion and the conclusion was that what we are proposing does not change the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Thank you, John, you have given me a little idea here. Does the House believe that the practice of sex outside Holy Matrimony is an essential matter?

The Bishop of London: I think it is fair to say that within the House we are not in agreement on that, and there will be a range of views which I am sure this Synod will know.

17. *The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the Introduction of GS 2328, Point 2, it is stated that “The motion also committed to new guidance and prayers for the blessing of same-sex relationships being issued...”. In February a great emphasis was placed on any blessing being for individuals within such relationships “and not on the relationship itself”. Can the House please clarify whether it intends blessings to be on same-sex relationships or on individuals within such relationships?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Full details are provided in Annex H of GS 2328 section 3.4 on blessings, and in particular 3.4.3 “What does ‘blessing’ symbolise or express?” Blessing in Scripture encapsulates the posture of God towards creation, with a desire to see all flourish and walk more closely into the ways of God. Blessing is conferred on people in Scripture, and the Church of England’s liturgies reflect this: it is people, rather than things, that are blessed. In the PLF, the people in a relationship are blessed too, while all the goods of their relationships are affirmed and celebrated.

18. *Mrs Busola Sodeinde (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Referring to the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and other *Living in Love and Faith* proposals, the Global South Fellowship of Anglican (GSFA) Primates on 19 October 2023 stated that their recent Cairo gathering was very aware of the reality of violence and persecution in other parts of the world, warning that “we are deeply concerned that if the Church of England presses ahead with the proposed changes, this will increase persecution of Christians in many parts of the Global South”. How will the House of Bishops support the Archbishop of Canterbury in ensuring that the words used, and actions taken by the House of Bishops and at General Synod do not catalyse to inflict more harm on Christians severely persecuted outside our boundaries, especially when there is so much disagreement on the same proposed changes in the Church of England?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Archbishop of Canterbury and many other bishops are very closely aware, through their contacts across the Anglican Communion, Diocesan Companion Links, etc. of the risk of persecution and the potential for violence against Christians, purportedly justified as attacks on different views on sexuality. We are equally aware of the ways that violence against homosexual and trans people, among others, is sometimes, falsely, legitimated by perceived Christian views. It is important to be clear that no violence or persecution of individuals, communities or faith groups is ever justified, and it must be unequivocally condemned.

The Bishop of Truro’s Review of the FCO response to the persecution of Christians made it clear that there are multiple drivers of persecution, and it cannot be attributed to any one cause. The priority remains to address such persecution head on. It is equally important to be clear that allowing threats of violence to close down debate or derail the

search for truth and the offer of good pastoral care for all, is effectively to fuel further violence and let the persecutors win, with frightening escalations likely in the future. Whatever the Church of England decides on LLF, those remain truths to uphold. The Archbishops and Bishops continue to listen to, and to be advised by, voices across the Anglican Communion through the whole of these processes.

Revd Mae Christie (Southwark): Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for that very encouraging reply. Given that LGBTQI+ Christians in many Anglican provinces are subject to homophobic violence, is it hoped that greater acceptance of LGBTQI+ Christians, particularly Anglicans, through initiatives such as *Living in Love and Faith* will encourage and support these, our brothers and sisters, living in places such as this?

The Bishop of London: At Lambeth 2020 I know that the team who had put together the *Living in Love and Faith* material (because I was part of it) spent some time across churches across the Anglican Communion looking at the resources that we had put together, and certainly many churches across the Anglican Communion recognise it as a good tool, so I certainly would hope that, while I recognise there are some that may feel more vulnerable because of the discussions around *Living in Love and Faith*, I do believe that the resources provide an opportunity as well to support LGBTQI+ members of the Anglican Communion across its world.

19. *Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What protections will be put in place for licensed lay ministers whose views do not accord with those of their incumbent, both in terms of the use of the prayers and also in the exercise of preaching and teaching?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As with very many pressure points in Church life, finding consensus will likely entail compromise and generosity, grounded in a desire to focus on the Church's mission and call, and should reflect an outworking of the deep bonds of trust and shared work between lay and ordained leaders.

Annex F of GS 2328 gives details of where reassurance is threaded through the *Pastoral Guidance* and the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, and of the ongoing work in this area. This includes proposals for a collective statement by the House of Bishops that seeks to provide a consistency of approach nationally but retain individuals' freedom of conscience; the proposal to set up an Independent Reviewer, who can be consulted in the event of concerns that individuals are not being treated fairly; and the setting up of the Pastoral Consultative Group to help address difficult questions or situations as they arise.

Mrs Nicola Denyer: Will the collective statement by the House of Bishops retaining an individual's freedom of conscience be drawn up in consultation with the Central Readers Council, involve lay people on the Pastoral Consultative Group and include the right of licensed lay ministers and Readers to reach and to preach according to their conscience?

The Bishop of London: Certainly we have sought in terms of the work we have done to have in mind lay people, as well as licensed lay ministers as well as ordained, so we would certainly take advice from those in Ministry Division to ensure that what we say is sensitive right across the Church.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Will the issuing of the statement and the appointment of the Reviewer and the establishment of the Pastoral Consultative Group therefore take place before the *Prayers* are commended? If not, why not?

The Bishop of London: No, they will not, Clive. I know that there is some view that everything should be ready before anything is put forward. What we recognise is that some of this is iterative. I have to say, if we waited to for everything to be ready I am not sure we would get anywhere. Certainly we are aware particularly that the Bishops' statement needs to be done sooner, and I think certainly on things like the Pastoral Consultative Committee we now have a very clear timeline and will certainly move to those things being in place before the authorization under B 2 starts.

20. *The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Please can you confirm that a draft form of *Pastoral Guidance for Ministry* has already been prepared, but that this draft was not shared with the House or College of Bishops?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A draft version of the *Pastoral Guidance* part 3 on Ministry was shared with both the College and House of Bishops.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Will Synod be consulted about its content before it is adopted? I am referring, of course, to the *Pastoral Guidance*.

The Bishop of London: Just a couple of things about *Pastoral Guidance*. The *Pastoral Guidance* is not in the same form as *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which was written three decades ago and put on the shelf. *Pastoral Guidance* will be much familiar to people who work in secular organisations that will move and change. We are very clear about that. There is no doubt, we hope, that draft *Pastoral Guidance* will come in the same way as sections 1 and 2 come to Synod, we would hope in the spring of next year. That is a good time, the spring of next year.

21. *The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Does the House of Bishops have the authority to issue *Pastoral Guidance* without the prior approval of the General Synod on the content of that guidance?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes, the House of Bishops has the authority

to issue *Pastoral Guidance* without the prior approval of General Synod concerning its content. As explained in paragraph 3.13 of *Governance of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion* (GS Misc 910), “any statement of the House of Bishops on [doctrinal and theological issues (including issues of moral and pastoral theology)] has an intrinsic authority which derives not from the Constitution of the General Synod but from the inherent individual and collegial authority of the House’s members as teachers of the faith and guardians of sound doctrine, given to them in their ordination to the episcopate.” The House of Bishops has brought parts 1 and 2 to General Synod prior to issuing them to show the work that has been done following the February 2023 Synod motion that asked for the Bishops to issue the *Pastoral Guidance*.

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): As the House of Bishops has the authority and is able to commend the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, why have the full prayers as well as the standalone services not been brought to this Synod under Canon B 2?

The Bishop of London: You will remember that the February Synod talked about commending the prayers - that was the notion - and so the suite of *Prayers in Love and Faith* will be commended probably in the middle of December. I think that is the date in the timetable. However, what we recognised was there was a concern about protection around the standalone services, hence the reason for looking at the standalone services being under B 2.

22. *Mrs Gill Ball (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will it be permissible during a clerical vacancy for a patron to insist that a given position on the use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* must be adhered to in order for an appointment to be made?

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 Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 sets out the procedure for the appointment of incumbents of benefices. An important part of that procedure is the preparation by the PCC of “a statement describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish”. The PCC may, if it wishes, request a joint meeting with the patron and bishop. The patron must obtain the approval of the bishop (where the bishop is not the patron) and the PCC’s representatives to make an offer to a priest to present him or her to the benefice. The appointment process therefore involves co-operation in the identification of a suitable candidate. In the unlikely event that a patron sought to present a priest whose position was clearly at odds with that of the PCC, the bishop or the PCC would be able to prevent such a presentation from going ahead. Patronage would ultimately lapse to the bishop.

23. *The Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In suggesting that PCCs will need to give their consent to the PLF being used in a parish, what consideration was given by the House of Bishops to the situation of multi-church parishes?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Consent by a PCC to the use of the PLF only applies to the provision of standalone services. The situation for a multi-church benefice or parish has been considered as part of the work developing the PLF. Part 2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* provides help with considering how to discuss using or not using the PLF in a local context. As stated there: "...the culture and church tradition of their local community needs to be taken into account... it is wise to come to an agreed, negotiated decision after a process of sensitive consultation, informed by the Pastoral Principles..." This will be true for a multi-church setting, where the outcome of the conversation may be different between different churches, and in an individual church setting.

24. *The Revd Jacob Madin (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In GS 2328, in Annex F point 13, you say that legal action could be taken against a clergyperson using the PLF because it might be claimed that they are indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England in an essential matter. Has the House of Bishops considered how this risk will be communicated to clergy who wish to use the prayers when they are authorized?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is the view of the House of Bishops that the commended material, used as specified in the Notes and *Pastoral Guidance*, does not represent a departure from doctrine in any essential matter, and therefore should not incur a significant legal risk, though this can never be fully ruled out. The risk of legal action is greatly diminished if the prayers are authorized, rather than commended, which is one of the reasons for bringing standalone services to Synod via a B 2 process. In addition, if a form of service is authorized, legal action would not be taken against individual clergy.

The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn): To the best of your knowledge, has the House of Clergy and General Synod ever before been asked to vote on a motion that involves placing fellow priests in a position of considerable legal uncertainty without being party to the legal advice on which the House of Bishops has acted?

The Bishop of London: I cannot answer that question, but I will make sure we respond to you in writing.

25. *Mrs Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that the *Listening with Love and Faith* Report noted that a majority of respondents wished to see liturgical provision for same-sex relationships, a finding echoed by the September 2023 survey of Church of England clergy by *The Times*, can the House of Bishops please explain their view that the will of the majority should not be taken as normative and that the use of the prayers should be subject to an opt-in rather than opt-out system?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As illustrated by the *Listening in Love and Faith* Report the Church, as a whole, contains a diverse spectrum of views. On the *Prayers of Love and Faith* it is hoped that the material made available responds to that diversity of views. It is intended that the prayers for Covenanted Friendships and the *Prayers of Love and Faith* Resource Section will be commended for use so that any minister with the incumbent's agreement can use them. The authorization of the standalone services will ask a parish to opt in, which formally requires that the PCC and incumbent agree to the use of the particular form of service. If a parish does not decide to opt in it does not mean they cannot or will not use the PLF resources for same-sex couples. The provision of an opt-in system is part of enabling transparency, particularly with the possibility of having a signposting system for couples seeking for a church that will welcome their request for a standalone service.

26. *Mrs Gill Ball (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Could a PCC pass a resolution that they wished to see the *Prayers of Love and Faith* used in their parish, even though this would not be binding on the incumbent, who has the right to ignore that resolution?

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 minister and the Parochial Church Council are under a duty to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish (Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, section 2(1)). Other functions of PCCs include:

- Co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question.

However, it is the minister who has the cure of souls in a parish, and it is ultimately a matter for the minister's judgement whether to accede to a request by a PCC that particular services be used in the parish.

No minister can be made to use the PLF against their conscience.

27. *The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In February 2023, General Synod rejected the following motion regarding the use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*: "In paragraph (e) at the end insert 'for use in those churches where both the incumbent so desires and the PCC votes in favour of their use'".

Given that General Synod expressed a view that a vote by a PCC should not be necessary to permit an incumbent to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, including the standalone service presented in draft form to the February 2023 Synod, why does GS 2328 introduce this requirement for the standalone service to be used?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Part of the process of producing the *Pastoral Guidance* has included consultation and discussion of the PLF, and has considered these matters carefully. It was agreed that the suite of resources, as a whole, should be used as flexibly as possible. However, there was also a desire for a form of “opt-in” to the PLF in order to provide reassurance to churches and couples. It provides transparency, in that an opt-in system enables a clear list to be held of churches offering standalone services which couples can access in order to find a church that will welcome their request for a service. It also protects churches that wish not to offer the prayers.

This formal opt-in system works best in negotiation between incumbent and PCC. The importance of the question, and the potential for division and conflict is such that it was considered wise and necessary to enable a process for a church and its incumbent to come to a common mind, as far as is possible. It takes seriously the corporate nature of discernment and decision-making of the whole people of God, as well as encouraging full transparency.

28. *The Revd Charlie Skrine (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In Annex E of GS 2328, *Pastoral Guidance* 2.2.2 helpfully says, “If differences over the PLF and the wider questions it connects to threaten a pastoral breakdown between clergy and PCC, the archdeacon should be brought in at the earliest opportunity”. In the event that the archdeacon’s assistance is unable to prevent such a pastoral breakdown, please could you direct us to an explanation of the possible consequences for the officeholder and for the PCC?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Section 2.2.2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* (GS 2328 Annex E) already points to a range of good practice and principles that clergy and PCCs should work through before needing to draw in the archdeacon. Situations of pastoral breakdown where the good practice and resources mentioned in 2.2.2 have not been used can be directed to try these. Any subsequent pastoral breakdown that occurs despite these steps will need to be worked through locally and contextually, as is already the case when these situations unfortunately arise in matters unrelated to LLF. The possible consequences for an officeholder or PCC will necessarily depend on the particular context. Most dioceses will have adopted practices for dealing with pastoral breakdown already, which may include processes for mediation or reconciliation. In cases where unacceptable behaviour has been alleged, each diocese will have a procedure in place for dealing with these kinds of complaints

The Revd Charlie Skrine (London): Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer, and generally and profoundly for your optimism, and for everything you are doing to create a future where mediation and reconciliation might be possible, but pastoral breakdown breaks parishes, stalls mission and leads to loss of office for clergy. Did the House of Bishops consider whether the current practices for dealing with pastoral breakdown will

be fit for purpose in the new situation given that the same disagreements may exist among those called on in dioceses to mediate and decide where the benefices are vacant?

The Bishop of London: We have sought in the *Pastoral Guidance* to try to thread through reassurance. We talk about the *Pastoral Principles*, the Difference course, and also the responsibility of dioceses to look at locally supported material as well. So we have thought about it, and we have tried to thread that through, and we have also said for those where that may not be sufficient formal structural provision that we will look at that.

29. *The Revd Charlie Skrine (London) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* In respect of Annex E of GS 2328, did the House consider what clergy or PCCs should do if there is conflict with their bishop (see the placeholder in the *Pastoral Guidance* 2.2.3) in the period of time between the commendation of the suite of *Prayers* and the implementation of the *Pastoral Reassurance* or the Independent Reviewer?

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 collective statement from the House of Bishops (see Annex F.10) will introduce a shared expectation of episcopal practice in relation to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, particularly around disagreement, including between clergy or PCCs and the bishop, and how this can be managed well. This statement will be part of the *Pastoral Reassurance* being developed alongside the commendation of the suite of *Prayers* and the introduction of the initial *Pastoral Guidance*. The statement will also point to the establishing of the Pastoral Consultative Group, as well as the introduction of an Independent Reviewer. Further work is being done on Formal Structural Pastoral Provision, which will be shared with Synod in due course.

30. *The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* GS 2328 states that no church is required to advertise that they do not use the PLF. How does the House of Bishops anticipate the transparency required in section 1.1.1 on page 4 of GS 2328 will be delivered with no need for a clear statement of doctrine or practice from those churches?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Section 1.1.6 on page 6 and 2.1.3 on page 17 of the *Pastoral Guidance* provides suggested approaches for churches to be transparent about their position, whether they decide to use some or none of the PLF.

The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale: Experience has shown that parishes who do not accept the ordination of women rarely communicate that clearly, so in the interests of transparency, stressed as so important in GS 3208, should it be necessary to require parishes to state their use or non-use of the *Prayers in Love and Faith*, because without such a requirement parishes could unintentionally mislead the public on this matter?

The Bishop of London: The *Pastoral Guidance* seeks to suggest approaches for churches to take to be transparent. I think we also need to recognise that not all churches

will have the same position, so there may be different views held within it, but certainly we do seek in the *Pastoral Guidance* to encourage churches to be transparent.

31. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops taken a vote or made any decision to pursue the possibility of a clergy person being able to marry/be married to a person of the same sex, and will this be addressed in the Ministry section of the Guidance (cf para 13, GS 2328)?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops has been considering the possibility of clergy entering into same-sex civil marriages, but a final decision has not been made, as further theological and legal work is needed, as well as accompanying work on *Pastoral Reassurance*. Once a decision is made, this will be addressed in part 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance*.

The Revd Canon John Dunnett: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for that answer and thank you for confirming that no final decision has been made by the House of Bishops regarding the possibility of clergy entering into same-sex civil marriages. Would you be willing to answer the question as to whether any decision or vote has been made, and would you be prepared to share the content of that with this Synod?

The Bishop of London: I think, John, you would be very surprised if we had not discussed it at this point. We have had had discussions, and right the way through the process, certainly over the last couple of years - I am trying to think how long I have been doing this - three or four years, we have always tried to seek indicative, sometimes we call them votes, but there is a way to try to seek the mind of the College and the House, so we have done it in that way.

Chair, I am not sure that we would share it because they were not taken with a view that they would be made public. I certainly think our view about are we transparent, are we open is very different to confidentiality. I think it is very different if you go into a discussion and debate without the knowledge it is going to be made public and it would not be our integrity to the House in that way.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Has the House of Bishops actually ever discussed the status of clergy in same-sex marriages from other provinces who wish to come and be part of the Church of England and officiate here?

The Bishop of London: We have had a discussion, Jayne.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: You have. Thank you.

32. *Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What pastoral support and advice will be offered to same-sex couples wishing to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, who cannot do so in their home church due to an incumbent

more conservative than their PCC, licensed readers and congregation? Why are only clergy consciences deemed important in this regard?

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* outlines a number of ways in which services can be made available to a couple in their area. Sections 1.1.3, 1.1.6 and 1.1.10 specifically mention the need for transparency in local churches so that those who consider a church their “home church” and are regular attenders can be fully aware of their parish’s position on the PLF. The *Pastoral Guidance* also advises on how a local incumbent may respond to a request. It is hoped that there would be churches and ministers willing to offer the PLF in every deanery, hence locally to any couple, though it is incumbent upon each diocese to make these churches known through a system that can be easily accessed by couples. Churches that choose to offer the PLF would also offer pastoral care for couples. As such, it is possible to preserve the conscience of incumbents and/or church members and PCCs (since a church may equally have a PCC more conservative than their incumbent), but still enable couples to find a church that will be receptive to their spirituality and desire to place their relationship before God.

Mr Paul Waddell: Could a couple from a church who wished to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, who had the support of the PCC and a licensed minister within the benefice or parish who is not the incumbent, be able to use those prayers within the church building if the incumbent was opposed?

The Chair: I think in that question you are asking for an expression of opinion on a matter of law and that is not in order at this time. I am sorry.

33. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* What is the date of the latest draft of the *Pastoral Guidance* and who has had access to it?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The latest draft of parts 1 and 2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* was prepared for this Synod following the meeting of the House of Bishops on 9 October, and published as part of Synod papers.

Part 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance* is currently under review. Several drafts were prepared, in consultation with a number of people and departments representing a range of skills, Church traditions and lived experience. However, it is not a mature enough draft to share with Synod at this point and will be discussed further with the House of Bishops before it can be shared at a future meeting of the General Synod. Further work includes theological and legal considerations, as well as a fuller consideration of *Pastoral Reassurance* needed to ensure the proposals can be put into practice in ways that support the whole Church in all its traditions. It is the intention of the House that this work should be done as soon as possible.

34. *Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At the July Synod, the Bishop of London commented “*Very few of our congregations will have a same view. 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*”. With that in mind what work has the House of Bishops done in assessing the impact and risk of increasing disagreement, division and disunity in the local Church by formally requiring each PCC to decide on its own position, “*with some consultation with the wider congregation*”, so “*a list and point of contact are available at deanery, area or diocesan level*”?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Part 2 of the *Pastoral Guidance* sets out approaches to having these conversations in a local context that aim to minimise increasing disagreement, division and disunity. It is important in holding to the intention of becoming more welcoming to the LGBTQI+ community that we are more transparent in our churches, and in our communities, about our engagement with them.

Mrs Mary Durlacher: We are grateful for the desire to maintain the greatest unity possible between community and church, and would ask what steps will be taken to protect the integrity of all churchmanships in this matter so that it is a little more balanced?

The Bishop of London: The *Pastoral Guidance* sets out approaches to local conversations and therefore in that way it recognises the local context for that to happen in that way, Mary.

Mr Benjamin John (St Albans): What was one of the key reasons for the compelled to resist meetings, and did those have any impact on the development, or has that affected any of the plans or proposals?

The Chair: I am afraid your question is not relevant to what we are dealing with at the moment.

35. *The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 says “The motion also committed to new guidance and prayers for the blessing of same-sex relationships” but there have also been assurances that the PLF do not bless relationships, but the people in them and the good qualities of those relationships, and that they are not changing the teaching that sexual intimacy finds its proper place in marriage. What consideration has the House given to the widespread talk of “blessing same-sex relationships” giving the impression the Church is willing to bless sinful relationships without repentance from sin?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is not the practice of the Church of England to bless anything other than people, though “blessing a relationship” is a shorthand often

used regardless of the words of the liturgy. How services and prayers are interpreted by those who attend will always be varied, and it cannot be controlled.

In addition, when we offer a nuptial blessing to a couple marrying, this is not conditional on their relationship being free from sin. Nor do we put conditions to a blessing offered at the end of a service, or to those who come to the altar in a Holy Communion service but do not wish to partake in the elements. A blessing does not represent the approval of the minister or the Church, but is a prayer that God would bring that person closer to them and enable them to flourish.

The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer, and for your ministry. What consideration has the House of Bishops given to the difference in the conversational understanding of having a relationship blessed and the meaning given in GS 2328 being so different that the prayers may appear to be unedifying, unseemly or misleading in what they are doing and trying to do, and the way people understand that, if I have got that question above.

The Bishop of London: The *Pastoral Guidance* in 1 and 2 very much in the way in which they have been produced looked at the space which we occupy and the clarity around that was seeking to do that.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): As Dr Richmond's question mentioned the subject of sin, I want to take you back to the answer you gave to my earlier question about the position of the House of Bishops on the sinfulness and essentialness of sex. If the House of Bishops does not have a position on the essentialness, on the question of whether sex outside marriage is not an essential matter and has different opinions, is it not effectively saying that, because it has different opinions, it is not an essential matter?

The Bishop of London: I think, Simon, what we have sought to do is to respond in a pastoral way at a time when, actually, the Church and when the House of Bishops is not in agreement, so that is what we sought to do. And what we are seeking to do is to enable couples who want to seek God's blessing to give thanks for their relationship in church. In a time of uncertainty, that is what we have been seeking to do, and that is what has shaped our response.

36. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In light of an increasing number of parishioners leaving the Church of England since February's Synod, and the substantial challenge of Common Fund withdrawal that dioceses are facing, what consideration is being taken for a formal split of the institution in response to the irreconcilable differences on matters of Marriage and Human Relationships?

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 College and House of Bishops have consistently expressed a view that, despite differences that exist within the Church, they are committed to working together in following Jesus's prayer that His Church may be

one. As set out in GS 2328, this work has been to develop as generous a theological, ecclesial and pastoral space as possible that holds the Church together while making provision for different views and interpretations on these matters held within it. Consideration has not been given to a formal split of the institution

Mr Luke Appleton: Obviously nobody wants a formal split in the Church of England, but considering the fact it is a potential outcome, albeit a tragic one, in the interests of good governance why has modelling not been done for this?

The Bishop of London: Sorry, can you ask your question again?

Mr Luke Appleton: Nobody wants to have a formal split in the Church of England, but considering that this is a potential outcome, albeit a tragic one, in the interests of good governance, why has modelling not been done on what this might look like?

The Bishop of London: In terms of the House of Bishops, I think we recognise that the issues that we have been discussing are very deeply held and some feel they are divisive. Our view is, and we have said it in the paper, that whilst that is the case, it is not our view that they are creedal. What we have been doing is seeking to hold a space which as many people can occupy. We also recognise that, for some, the pastoral reassurance that has threaded through has not been sufficient. We have listened to that. Therefore, we have taken actions, and you will see in the papers for those for whom it is not sufficient, the House should look at structural pastoral provision, so that work is going on.

The Chair: I think I heard a number of voices saying “supplementary”. I cannot see you. Can I ask that only the person saying “supplementary” speaks, and others do not speak on their behalf please? Thank you. I thought I heard a voice coming from this end as well. Go ahead, ma’am.

The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham): I am quite short. I am sorry, but I was standing! Has any formal assessment been made of the numbers who have already left the Church due to its discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, along with those who may leave or those who are simply just unwilling to join in the first place, particularly young people, due to the Church’s continuing discrimination of LGBTQIA+ people?

The Bishop of London: We have made no formal assessment, but we have listened to the stories and have listened to people who have found it hard.

37. *The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* GS 2338 sets out principles for pastoral provision. Could the House of Bishops please summarise their reflections on the lessons learned from the effects of the implementation of the Five Guiding Principles when framing these provisions?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: In GS 2328, Annex F provides details of the

Pastoral Reassurance that is both already part of the proposals and that is part of the further work that needs to be done. More work is required on providing appropriate pastoral provision, and this will be informed by work being undertaken by the committee of the House of Bishops, the Standing Commission on the House of Bishops Declaration.

38. *Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* In Annex F, Exec Summary A2 of GS 2328, why is *Pastoral Reassurance* required for those who lost February's main motion, who recorded 41% of the vote, but not for the 38% who voted for equal marriage in February's amendment 64, for whom the *Prayers of Love and Faith* also do not satisfy?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As noted, equal marriage is not part of the motion that was agreed in February, and has not been part of the subsequent development of its implementation. I understand that does not diminish the desire for those that wanted to see equal marriage as part of the motion, but it does set the parameters within which we have been working. The definition of *Pastoral Reassurance* set out in Annex F A2 states that, for what is being proposed in response to that motion, it is there to support those who joyfully wish to use the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, those who do not or who might be opposed to their use, and those who are unsure. Further work is being done on formal structural pastoral provision to try and ensure that all parts of the Church can continue to live, minister and reach out in the fullest possible way.

39. *The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The LLF material distinguished different degrees of divisive disagreement. What consideration has the House of Bishops given to verses like 1 Cor 6.9-11, Gal 5.18-21, and Rev. 21.8, which say that fornicators will not inherit the Kingdom of God; and verses like Rom 16.17, 2 Thess. 3.14, and Titus 3.10, which instruct avoidance of those who do not obey apostolic teaching; and how such verses relate to the depth of present disagreement, and how much "Formal Structural Pastoral Provision" they should offer?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Disagreement is at the heart of the uncertainty before us right now; disagreeing over what type of disagreement we are having adds a layer to uncertainty, since not all agree that it is the kind of disagreement that necessitates sharp differentiation. In addition, the form of the PLF and their theological undergirding influences what type of disagreement we are having.

Biblical material being considered includes the vast amount of counsel to attend to unity and avoid dissensions and factions. We also recognise that this is not a disagreement between a church and one believer who chooses to ignore the Gospel, but a disagreement between groups of believers all seeking to live as well as they can under God, and seeking to interpret Scripture and tradition in faithful ways in the present.

Balancing these different considerations will be part of ongoing work on possibilities and shapes of structural pastoral provision.

The Chair: Is there anyone else interested in this topic? I am asking the question because, as I said at the beginning, I do want to have a wider variety of people speaking. If there is no one else standing, you may go ahead.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Have the Bishops considered the extract from GS Misc 2358, the Recent Evolution of Liturgical Procedures, where the Revision Committee at the time said, “It was not to be expected that any service authorized for use under Canon B 5A would be doctrinally suspect, but the proper test would be when that service was submitted for authorization under Canon B 2” given that the disagreements so far have surely indicated that the proposals are doctrinally suspect?

The Bishop of London: Yes, Debbie, we have considered that. I think there is a difference in view on that.

The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond: I have a supplementary on Question 39, my question. Has the House of Bishops considered the fact that, given some people do believe that these are fundamental questions of salvation, and that they are issues that require separation, differentiation, avoidance, that it would be generous and pastoral to respect the conscience of those who feel that way and offer a level of differentiation, even if not all the Bishops agree that it is such an issue, if that question is clear enough?

The Bishop of London: I think the paper is clear that we have recognised that for some the *Pastoral Reassurance* that threads through the document is not sufficient. I have to say I use the words “structural pastoral provision”. The reason I do that is because a colleague of mine pointed out that “differentiation” came out of apartheid, and I do not think therefore that is an appropriate word to use.

The Chair: Questions to 40 to 45 the Archbishop of York to respond to.

40. *Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Please would the House of Bishops report which resolutions were debated on the afternoon of 9 October and in the preceding College of Bishops meeting, and the voting figures on those resolutions?

41. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At the meeting of the House of Bishops on 9 October 2023, how many of the voting members of the House present voted in favour of the proposals and other materials contained in GS 2328, how many voted against, and how many abstained?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I will answer both of these questions

together. I am grateful for the questions. The proceedings of meetings of the House and College of Bishops, including details of votes, are confidential.

Mr Clive Scowen: Has the House considered what possible justification there could be for a House of this Synod keeping its minutes and records secret, and whether there is any legitimate reason, in a time when transparency is highly valued, for not reverting to the pre-1997 practice of publishing full minutes even when the discussions were held in committee? If so, what was the conclusion the House, and, if not, will they now consider the matter urgently?

The Archbishop of York: Thank you very much, Clive. Obviously, as I am sure you would agree, there is a difference between secrecy and confidentiality, but I entirely accept that the issue is being raised, and we will see that more tomorrow than today, where there are some other questions coming up. Andrew Atherstone has asked a question and supplied a really helpful paper. So this is something that I think the House of Bishops will be looking at and reviewing in order to get that balance right. Of course, we all know that in every organisation or group we are part of, there need to be places where you can have a confidential discussion which is free and frank, but there also need to be openness and transparency, and we need to get that balance right. I am glad that is being raised through this Synod.

Could I also beg your indulgence, Chair? I am not the Chair of the House of Bishops and there is no Chair of the House Bishops. I learned long ago in liturgy that you pay attention to the text but pay even more attention to the rubrics. There is no Chair of the House of Bishops but I am the Chair of the Standing Committee of House of Bishops, and perhaps we could look into that.

The Chair: I believe the Archbishop is the Chair.

The Archbishop of York: But I am not.

The Chair: But you are not.

The Revd Michael Tufnell (Salisbury): Contrary to my colleague, Clive, over there, I can understand why the proceedings of such meetings can and sometimes should be confidential for free and frank conversation as is being described. What then is going to happen to find out who leaked such confidential information to the national press, because I agree with the Archbishop of York that that is important, and what disciplinary action might be taken to uphold the integrity of that confidentiality?

The Archbishop of York: I am very happy to give an answer.

The Chair: I know you are happy to, sir.

The Archbishop of York: I will do as I am told.

The Chair: However, I do not think this is strictly relevant to the question as it is there. Sorry.

Questions 42 to 45 will be taken as a group. Perhaps you could indicate which one you are asking the supplementary to when you rise to speak.

42. *Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Was the text of GS 2328 seen by, and signed off by, the whole House of Bishops prior to it being issued to General Synod on 20 October 2023?

43. *Br Philip Dulson OSB (Religious Communities)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Which members of the House of Bishops signed off GS 2328?

44. *The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Were all of the General Synod papers on LLF circulated on Friday 20 October shared with all the members of the House and College of Bishops? If not, who was responsible for drawing each of them up and for signing each of them off?

45. *Mr Andrew Farley (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In GS Misc 1353, General Synod is informed that the House of Bishops met on 9 October 2023 to agree “the papers” to be presented to the General Synod on *Living in Love and Faith*. Which of the following papers were agreed by the House of Bishops in the form in which they have been presented to General Synod: GS 2328 (pages 1-4); Annex A; Annex B; Annex C; Annex D; Annex E; Annex F; Annex G; Annex H; Annex I?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With your permission Chair, I will answer these four questions together. I am grateful for the questions. The preparation of Synod papers routinely involves presenting drafts and accompanying papers to the House of Bishops, and the House having a discussion of what papers need to be prepared for Synod, which includes edited versions of existing papers as well as additional papers. These papers will then be finalised by the working group responsible for them.

In this case, the House of Bishops agreed on the substance of papers needed to be presented to Synod, which were prepared under the oversight of, and agreed by, the LLF Steering Group. The final papers were based on feedback from the College and House and noting the diversity of opinions held by the Bishops.

Mr Andrew Farley: I have a supplementary to Question 45. Thank you, Archbishop, for your reply. Would it be correct to conclude from the reply that none of the papers, or only some of them, were signed off by the House of Bishops in the form that we have in their Plenary Session on 9 or 10 of October?

The Archbishop of York: I am just going to repeat my answer that there is a signing off of the substance of the papers but, no, we do not check every semicolon, cross every T and dot every I. I think that would be true of every single paper that comes out of the House of Bishops.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth): GS 2328 states clearly that the place of sex within marriage is part of the doctrine of the Church of England. Please can I just clarify that we were told earlier in answer to Simon Butler's question that the Bishops are, in fact, not all in agreement with this?

The Chair: I do not believe that that it is relevant to question 45 or to the answer actually given. Supplementaries are meant to be relevant specifically to the questions.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt: If I may, question 45 is about the papers for Synod.

The Chair: I am afraid my determination stands. Thank you. Any other supplementary questions in that group?

Question 53. Sorry, I turned over more than one page.

The Bishop of London: Wishful thinking!

The Chair: Question 46.

46. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What amount of time was given by (i) the College of Bishops and (ii) the House of Bishops to considering the impact of GS 2328 on the veracity of the apology to LGBT people agreed by Synod in February 2023?

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 first part of the motion agreed in February, that laments and repents of the experiences past and present that LGBTQI+ people have encountered in the Church, has always been a prime consideration in the deliberations of both the College and House of Bishops. In introducing the work at the meetings, and in the individual contributions by Bishops, the College and the House were reminded of the apology made. In the drafting of GS 2328, a lot of work went into trying to ensure the paper was pastorally sensitive, including incorporating feedback from readers with lived LGBTQI+ experience. We recognise that the paper does not include everything that was hoped for by this point, but both the College and the House have been clear that further required work should be done as soon as possible.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for many things, but I am grateful for you recognising that the paper does not include everything that was promised and not just hoped for, as well as its unfortunate tone. I wonder if you are aware how premature, if not meaningless and hollow, the apology that laments and repents of a failure to be

welcoming to so many of us feels when we are witnessing the roll back on the decisions that we made in February?

The Bishop of London: Jayne, I said in February that I recognise that lamenting and repenting without action is not good enough and I recognise that some feel that we are moving too slowly. I suppose it is for the debate tomorrow about, in a sense, what we are, have been and are seeking to do. One of my sorrows continues to be that, through this process, I do think that LGBTQI people have continued to feel pain, but I am a person of hope.

47. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Do all the General Synod papers on LLF circulated on Friday 20th October accurately reflect the current position of both the House and College of Bishops?

The Bishop of London replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The General Synod papers on LLF circulated on Friday 20th October have been subject to a process of refinement that has involved both the College and House of Bishops. As is the case within the Church as a whole at this time, the College and the House contain a diversity of views on the issues addressed by LLF, and the material presented has aimed to represent a position that takes proper account of that diversity, while providing a basis for moving forward.

48. *Mr Robert Zampetti (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can you confirm that there were clear recorded majorities in both the House and College of Bishops to allow clergy to enter into same-sex civil marriage and to remove the stipulation that currently requires celibacy for clergy in same-sex relationships?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. The proceedings of these meetings, including details of votes, are confidential.

49. *Mr Robert Zampetti (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can you confirm that a further letter from evangelical groups threatening legal action was sent to the House or College of Bishops between the end of the meeting of the College and the House meeting in October?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Correspondence was sent to the House of Bishops from a range of groups between the two meetings, which included evangelical groups that gave legal opinion on the route of authorization for the PLF but which did not explicitly threaten legal action.

50. *Mrs Jennifer Fellows (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What pastoral support is being offered to ordinands who have deferred ordination, and deacons who feel unable to be ordained presbyter, whilst the LLF process is ongoing?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Pastoral support is always personal and contextual, which needs to be put in place locally, with sensitivity to the specificities of a person's circumstances. Where an ordinand defers ordination, their TEs, DDO and sending church would be natural places of support. For a deacon feeling unable to be ordained presbyter, support should be offered via their IME officer, and if needed, through their archdeacon or bishop.

Mrs Jennifer Fellows: Can the Bishop confirm that pastoral care for a deacon unable to be ordained presbyter while LLF process is ongoing does not, and should never, include them being asked to consider resigning their orders?

The Bishop of London: No, I do not think it should.

The Very Revd Mandy Ford (Dean of Bristol): Thank you for your answer, Bishop Sarah. What pastoral support is being offered to LGBTQI Christians in the process of discernment, or ordinands in training, over the inevitable distress caused by the drawn out nature of implementing the February 2023 decisions welcomed by all three Houses of Synod?

The Bishop of London: Thank you for your question. I think the answer is exactly the same. I think that pastoral support is always personal, contextual and needs to be put in place locally for the specific requirements.

51. *Mrs Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 makes 19 references to parishes being able to opt in to use the prayers, but no consideration is given to an opt-out system where clergy and parishes opposed to the use of the prayers can pass resolution to positively affirm their wishes. Can an account be given of the amount of time and nature of debate that took place to reach the conclusion that opt-in was preferred over opt-out?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: An opt-in or an opt-out system is only possible under the route of Authorization for the Standalone Services of PLF and not Commendation, where use of the Resource Section of the PLF is up to the discretion of the minister. The details of the reasons for deciding to authorize the standalone forms of service are given in GS 2328. The option to opt out was considered, but it was felt that if a parish opted out they would be considered to be opting out of all the PLF, when they may still wish to use some of the resources or the prayers for Covenanted Friendships. Opting in provides a transparent way of demonstrating that a parish is offering these standalone services. In addition, an opting-in route does not force parishes who, for any reason, may not feel ready to have a constructive conversation on whether to use the prayers. An opt-in system enables every parish to move at its own pace.

52. *Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When will *Issues in Human Sexuality* be withdrawn, and what is its current status?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Those involved in the discernment process, as well as TEIs, need a framework within which to work with candidates and ordinands. *Issues* has been used as a guide, though it is not in itself guidance and was not intended for that purpose. We recognise there is a need for a replacement document, and we hope to be able to agree this as a matter of great urgency. A draft of part 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance* is being developed for this purpose.

This is done in collaboration with those involved in the discernment process and in ministerial training to identify what is needed for a coherent, fair and functional framework to replace *Issues* in a way that would be flexible and responsive. Consultation has happened with people of different theological traditions and lived experience. In addition to *Pastoral Guidance*, a Pastoral Consultative Group will be set up to ensure that urgent, complex or new questions that may arise can be explored, people supported in their local contexts, and guidance updated as needed.

Until the time new *Pastoral Guidance* comes into place, *Issues* remains the only framework for DDOs and TEIs to work with.

53. *Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the legal advice received by the Bishops suggest that the intended standalone services contain anything that deviates from the doctrine of the Church?

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 intention is for the proposed standalone services to be subject to the process for authorization by the General Synod under Canon B 2. To be authorized under Canon B 2, a form of service must be “such as in the opinion of the General Synod is neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter” (emphasis added). To support this, the Synod’s standing orders that apply to liturgical business provide for the Synod to request a formal report on a question of doctrine. The basis on which the House of Bishops proposes the standalone services is described in GS 2328 at Annex A. The Synod will be provided with any legal advice it needs to determine whether it is of the opinion referred to above.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): I am pleased, Bishop, that you have said that Synod will be provided with any legal advice it needs to determine whether it is of the opinion referred to above in your final sentence. When, is my question, will the Synod be provided with that information, please, and could it be sooner rather than later?

The Bishop of London: Debbie, the legal advice relates to the process of B 2 and so, in terms of the process of B 2, the appropriate legal advice will be given at that time.

The Revd Mae Christie (London): Just one question. Could the House of Bishops, or you perhaps on their behalf, provide a definition for a standalone service?

The Bishop of London: The details are in the papers. Really, the standalone service is service for which a blessing and thanksgiving is the main focus.

The Revd Mae Christie: I think I meant in a more general sense.

The Bishop of London: Oh.

The Revd Mae Christie: Standalone services as a general principle.

The Bishop of London: I can get an answer written to you.

The Revd Mae Christie: Okay.

The Bishop of London: I know somebody who knows.

The Chair: Questions 54 and 55 will be taken together, and The Archbishop of York is responding.

54. *The Revd Dr Chris Moore (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The fifth of the Nolan Principles, published by His Majesty's Government as the *Seven Principles of Public Life*, reads: "Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing". Given this, will the House of Bishops release all the legal advice given to them with regards to the *Prayers of Love and Faith*? If not, what are the clear and lawful reasons for withholding this information from General Synod?

55. *Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What was the full and unredacted legal advice that was provided by Church House to the House of Bishops at their meetings on LLF during the autumn 2023, and how did this differ to that provided before the motion on LLF was passed by General Synod in February 2023?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer questions 54-55 together.

Similar considerations apply here as to legal advice obtained by the Government from its legal advisers. Legal advice obtained by bodies with specific governance and policy-formation functions in the Church of England - including the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners - is not normally disclosed outside those bodies. This is to enable them to obtain full and frank legal advice in confidence.

Just as legal advice obtained by the Government is not normally laid before Parliament or cited in debate, legal advice obtained by the Church's governance bodies is not normally provided to the General Synod unless the body concerned considers it expedient to do so.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt: I want to ask has the House of Bishops considered how Synod can be sure that the Bishops have the power to commend the *Prayers of Love and Faith* when the argument that they are a small change in a matter regarded as doctrinal and, hence, not indicative of a departure from doctrine in any essential matter was not addressed in the legal advice that we were provided with in February, and what conclusion did it reach?

The Archbishop of York: Well, I believe we have received that and we are enacting the decision of the Synod in February.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): On what basis has the House of Bishops, being a House of this Synod, determined that its relationship to the other two Houses is analogous to that between Government and Parliament and that it is a governance body like the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners, both of which are legally independent charities, statutory charities, rather than merely a part of a larger statutory entity to which the disclosure of legal advice is being refused. To put it simply ---

The Archbishop of York: Oh, good.

Mr Clive Scowen: --- the question is how do you justify likening yourself to the Government when, in fact, you are a House of this Synod?

The Archbishop of York: As I indicated in an earlier answer which relates to these issues, and this is where it is relevant, and I am Chair of the Standing Committee, this is something the Standing Committee will reflect on.

56. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At its meeting on 9 October 2023 did the House of Bishops agree (in line with the legal advice set out in GS Misc 1339) that same-sex marriage is distinct from Holy Matrimony and that same-sex marriage does not impinge on Holy Matrimony in a way that contradicts the Church's doctrine? Or did the House of Bishops agree that the alleged distinction could no longer be maintained?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops considered the complexity of the relationship between civil marriage and same-sex marriage, which includes both areas of similarity and significant differences, and focused more specifically on same-sex marriage and Holy Matrimony

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr: May I begin by expressing my most sincere thanks to you, Archbishop, and to the Synod staff for correcting the inadvertence in the Questions Notice

Paper to ensure that an answer was given to my question. My supplementary question is this. At its meeting on 9 October 2023, did the House of Bishops vote on and agree that same-sex marriage is distinct from Holy Matrimony and that same-sex marriage does not impinge on Holy Matrimony in a way that contradicts the Church's doctrine?

The Archbishop of York: It feels like a little bit of a theme when I get up to answer questions that there is a problem over the question and the answer. I can assure you that it is just a coincidence, but it did happen at the last Synod and I too am very grateful. It was just an oversight. I am very grateful to the staff for amending that, and thank you for your understanding and graciousness, Stephen.

Again, I know you will probably hear the answer as an unsatisfactory one, but I hope you will understand it is quite legitimate for this Synod and others to question the confidentiality under Standing Order 14 of the way the House of Bishops undertakes its business. It is quite in order to question that, and I have said we will reflect on that. Nevertheless, I am bound by that confidentiality, and it is incumbent upon me, therefore, to say that I am afraid I cannot answer that question because those discussions were confidential. That is how it is. But these matters are carefully under review. These are very serious questions which we are working through. I have confidence that we will work through them for the good of the whole Church, and for each part of it, but I am sorry that I am bound by the confidentiality I have undertaken and cannot say any more in this forum.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr: Can I ask you please to explain ---

The Chair: No, I am afraid you may not. I am sorry, thank you.

57. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Why the sudden decision to move to Canon B 2 for authorizing the standalone service, rather than Canon B 5A?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following the Canon B 2 process for these services will provide the firmest footing for those using them within the shortest possible timeframe. The House of Bishops decided that while B 5A could have enabled the standalone services to be brought into use more quickly, the process would ultimately require further B 2 authorization that would have taken longer overall for the status of the forms of service to be settled.

Mr Peter Barrett: I just really wanted, if you can give it, some more clarity on why there was a sudden change in the decision to go from B 5A to B 2. I suspect it was probably around October the 9th.

The Bishop of London: The truth is there was not a sudden change. I even think back in July there was mention of B 5A. This has been a process where, as I said before, the

House and the College have been in discussion with each other. We are doing exactly what we should do in terms of it. I do not think it was sudden, but I think it was recognising that B 2 gave the quickest way of getting the standalone services authorized into use. You will see that the Bishop of Oxford is bringing an amendment tomorrow. The further clarity has been that, actually, you could run experimental services alongside the B 2, which is where the amendment comes from, and I think the Archbishop of York has indicated that he will support it. It is likely that I will as well.

58. *Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops considered whether the absence of legal protection for clergy who use the PLF will present a barrier to many clergy using them?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has considered the welfare of clergy throughout the work of implementation. There is not an absence of legal protection for the clergy who use the PLF alongside the *Pastoral Guidance* that accompanies them, but what is present is the possibility of legal challenge concerning their use. While it is not possible to unequivocally say there is no legal risk, given the particulars of every circumstance, the prayers and the guidance have been worked on throughout so that they are robust in this regard.

Mr Peter Barrett: Sorry to get a bit technical, but I just want to quote from Annex F, B 14 in the *Living in Love and Faith* paper and it says, "Provided the minister has used the *Prayers of Love and Faith* resources in accordance with the *Pastoral Guidance* relevant to that time, any minister subject to such a complaint could cite the House's view in his or her defence, but it would be for a tribunal or a court to make this decision". I just find that very unreassuring and I just wonder if you felt that as well?

The Bishop of London: So I think what we have ---

The Chair: I am sorry, Bishop Sarah. You are asking for an expression of opinion in that, I am sorry, thank you.

59. *The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Has the House of Bishops ever published liturgical material for consideration by the General Synod that it has considered "contrary to, or indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter"?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Canon B 2.1 indicates that "any form of service ... approved by the General Synod shall be such as in the opinion of the General Synod is neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter". I am not aware of any situation in which the House of Bishops has introduced liturgical material which it believed would not meet that test.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler: Bishop Sarah, notwithstanding your remarks and the Archbishop of York's remarks earlier about the Bishop of Oxford's amendment, can you confirm that the material under Annex C, the standalone services, also is not indicating a departure from a doctrine of the Church of England and the House's view and that, therefore, the minister does have discretion to use that material under Canon B 5.2 already?

The Chair: You are asking for an expression of legal opinion, Sir, so I am afraid I will ask the Bishop not to respond to that.

The Revd Canon John Bavington (Leeds): I wonder if you could tell me, Bishop Sarah, what is the definition of “any essential matter” in relation to the doctrine of marriage?

The Chair: That is also asking for an expression of opinion.

60. *The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the decision of the House of Bishops to seek authorization of parts of *Prayers of Love and Faith* under Canon B 2 at a very late stage, can the House identify those groups or individuals whose threats of legal action informed their decision?

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 routes of commendation or authorization for the PLF have been under discussion by the House of Bishops since the LLF motion was passed at the February meeting of Synod. While authorization has been considered a preferable option, Canon B 2 has always been a possibility. The decisions taken by the House have been informed by iterative discussion and material provided by the LLF Steering Group. They have not been informed by specific threats of legal action by groups or individuals.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler: Let me try again. Bishop Sarah, what advice can the House give to a minister who, under the terms of my last question, might want to use the standalone services under Canon B 5.2?

The Bishop of London: If the amendment tomorrow is accepted, what we will do is provide *Pastoral Guidance* related to using services in time for an experimental period.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): I just want to know, if the Bishop of Oxford's amendment tomorrow is accepted, would the House then propose, instead of commending the Annex C prayers, to bring them too under B 5A?

The Bishop of London: No. You have to wear a green shirt to get C.

61. *The Ven. Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The legal advice upon which the House of Bishops' proposals in February 2023 were

based (GS Misc 1339) included the opinion that “the institution of Holy Matrimony and the institution of civil marriage are now distinct”. GS 2328 refers to the legal advice which the House of Bishops received at its meeting on 9 October 2023, but the alleged distinction is nowhere mentioned. Did the advice of the Law Office change between February and October 2023; and, if so, in what respect?

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 legal and theological basis for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* is set out in Annex A to GS 2328. The House does not propose to say more at this stage about the confidential legal advice it has obtained.

The Ven. Adrian Youings: Is it still the understanding of the House of Bishops that the institution of Holy Matrimony and the institution of civil marriage are now distinct, as stated in GS Misc 1339?

The Bishop of London: The discussion that the Houses had, in terms of Holy Matrimony and civil marriage, is that there are commonalities and overlapping characteristics but they are not the same.

62. *The Ven Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When will the House of Bishops be publishing the legal advice they received which General Synod is given to understand provides the legal foundation for the use of *Prayers of Love and Faith*?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The legal and theological basis on which the House of Bishops are proceeding is described in Annex A of GS 2328. Legal advice obtained by the House of Bishops is not normally disclosed. This is to enable the House to obtain full and frank legal advice in confidence.

The Ven. Adrian Youings: Does the House of Bishops understand the need for the House of Clergy and the House of Laity to receive legal advice in order to inform their ability to carefully consider in an informed way the motion that we will consider later in this session?

The Bishop of London: In terms of the papers that we have provided, there is a reflection of our understanding of the legal position and the theological position there, and I commend the papers to you.

63. *Mr Andrew Bell (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the PLF debate in February, the Archbishop of York told us that “... I will not be able to support commending these Prayers until we have the *Pastoral Guidance* and pastoral provision”. Given that neither has been provided in full, on what grounds has the House of Bishops felt able to commend the prayers at this stage and thus reject the commitment given by the Archbishop of York”?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. Firstly, let me be clear - the comments I made were about myself, not the House of Bishops collectively. A Synod speech, even from an Archbishop, cannot bind the Synod or the House of Bishops to a particular course of action. Since the February group of sessions, the House and College of Bishops have met many times, to work on implementing the decision made in February, but also in a spirit of prayerful discernment to wrestle with the complex issues that face us in settling both the pastoral provision and pastoral guidance.

Mr Andrew Bell: Thank you for your response and I apologise if this also follows a theme a little bit. Did the House of Bishops consider how members of the other Houses of Synod were properly to engage in the debate without the full resources, including the *Pastoral Guidance*, pastoral provision and the legal advice which they had received and, if so, what were their conclusions?

The Archbishop of York: Well, absolutely, yes. In all our deliberations, we are seeking to take account of the views of the whole Church and, obviously, particularly the other two Houses of this Synod. It is not that we have seen something that we are withholding. There are various works in progress and, as I had hoped I indicated, answers to questions have a word limit. I would have liked to have said more in my answer and so forgive me if it is a bit too condensed.

I think what I have come to understand, as we have moved from February, is that provision is needed, but provision is, first of all, woven into the process. There may well, as the Bishop of London has indicated in an answer a little while ago, probably need to be some other things on top of that and the next stage that we move into, particularly if - I get all the Canons mixed up, forgive me - Canon B 5A, if that is the road we go down towards B 2, that will be an experimental period which will allow us to find out a lot more.

Secondly, the *Pastoral Guidance* I have come to understand and accept as being the best way of doing it. It is not a document that I put on a bookshelf. It is an evolving body of guidance in a way that is familiar to people working in other walks of life, but perhaps is a new thing for us in the Church. With regard to the legal advice, the papers we have got before us do contain within them the fruits of that legal advice. Again, I reiterate what I have said several times: I have heard what has been said and I will, with others, reflect upon that.

The Revd Charlie Skrine (London): With regard to legal advice, are you able to confirm that the Legal Office works for the House of Clergy and the House of Laity as much as it works for the House of Bishops?

The Bishop of London: Yes, I think I am. Whenever I stand up here, I also think, oh, somebody is ... I am not at all suggesting you are trying to catch me out, Charlie, so I am going to preface this by saying it is my understanding that we are one Church, that we are working together and, therefore, our Legal Offices are working for all of us. However,

I accept that sometimes there are conversations with one bit and sometimes there are conversations with another. I do not suggest they are offering different bits of advice, but we are in an iterative, ongoing process. I am sorry that is not a satisfactory answer.

64. *Miss Debbie Woods (Chester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 confirms that the doctrine of marriage is unchanged, and that the teaching that marriage, as understood according to Canon B 30, is the only proper place for sexual intimacy. On the basis of this, has the House of Bishops committed to refrain from its members making any public statements which contradict this confirmed teaching, and if not, on what basis?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 speaks of the diversity of views that are held within the Church in relation to a range of views that touch on the areas of marriage and sexual intimacy. The House of Bishops also contains this diversity of views, and does not compel its members to go against their conscience in what they say or don't say. We are not changing the doctrine of the Church regarding marriage, but we are exploring the space for a genuine, careful pastoral response: the kind of response that genuinely rejoices at the goods that we can see in same-sex relationships – faithfulness, stability, fruitfulness, love, faith, grace – and keeps looking for where God is at work, and how we may respond faithfully to God's call to holiness in the fashioning of our lives, rather than focus primarily on identifying the absence of virtue, or good, in others

Miss Debbie Woods: Thanks again to the support staff for getting the correct answer in place. On what basis would the House of Bishops support the reason of conscience to justify one of its members publicly contradicting the clear doctrine of the Church that he or she has vowed to uphold at their consecration?

The Bishop of London: My belief is that all of my episcopal colleagues, in the same way as I do, take very seriously our consecration vows, and there is nothing more profound than at a concentration to relisten to those vows. My belief is that we all take them seriously.

Mr Benjamin John (St Albans): The Thirty-nine Articles were agreed for the avoiding of diversities of opinions. The answer says that there is diversity of views in the Church and in the House of Bishops. Despite the current position which we have heard, the Bishops vowed to believe, teach and uphold. What work has been done as to how that diversity of beliefs came to be, whether it should be tolerated as it currently is, and how it can be avoided in the future?

The Bishop of London: I think the paper that is there around the theological foundation is very helpful. The truth is that we will all talk within this room around how theology has evolved in different parts. I am sure that we will have a whole range of different views in this room, not just on these issues but around a whole range of issues. We recognise that that is not bad, that it is not bad that we are able to discuss and debate our differing opinions on a whole range of issues. That is good. You only have to look back at Church

tradition and our history as an Anglican Church to realise that that has been good. In my view, we ought to enable those discussions to continue.

Related to this, within the House we are very clear that what we seek to do is to implement the motion in February and, therefore, to seek a space where we have not changed the doctrine of marriage but we can co-exist, unity under Christ, in the way that we are called to do.

65. *Mr Andrew Farley (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The letter from Ben Bradshaw MP to Andrew Selous appears to demonstrate knowledge of the confidential discussion of the House of Bishops on 9 October 2023. What action has the House taken to explore how Mr Bradshaw might have been privy to this information?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House has not taken any action to explore what information Mr Bradshaw might have been privy to. The House of Bishops at its most recent meeting noted how damaging of trust the leaking of information is.

Mr Andrew Farley: Given the House of Bishops noted how damaging of trust the leaking of information is, may I ask why the House did not take any action to explore how Mr Bradshaw obtained the information and discipline the bishop or bishops accordingly?

The Archbishop of York: Well, that is a very good question. It deeply grieves me that information is leaked from anybody, but particularly within the Church. Again, as I said earlier, I fully understand the reasons why some may question the confidential nature of the House of Bishops meeting under Standing Order 14 but, nevertheless, we are bound by it. It troubles me that there are leaks. All I can say is, we will continue to reflect on how we can find out how that is happening and try to prevent it happening. I am sorry, I cannot say more.

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): Thank you, Archbishop for what you have just said, but what steps are being made to ensure that private business within the House of Bishops is not leaked to the public or by the public or by the House of Bishops in the future?

The Archbishop of York: Well, I hope you would sympathise here. What can I say? I appeal to my sisters and brothers, as I do to myself, that we honour the undertakings that we make to each other. It grieves me when that does not happen. I think all I will say is, as a follower of Jesus Christ, I am not surprised by human sinfulness. I am well aware of it in myself, and when I fall short, I seek repentance. I would hope that all of us would seek to do that in all areas of our lives. I cannot make people behave properly, but I can carry on trying to behave properly myself and encouraging others to do so as well and, when I get it wrong, I will seek to make amends.

The Chair: I am sorry, we have already had two to that question.

66. *The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Annex H of GS 2328 (*Living in Love and Faith: Theological Rationale*) explicitly builds on the arguments about blessings advanced by Walter Moberly and Isabelle Hamley in papers which are available on the LLF Hub. Yet Annex H does not engage with subsequent critiques of Moberly and Hamley, including in Dr Martin Davie's booklet *With God's Approval?* (Oxford: Dictum Press, 2023). This argues (p.58) that we cannot rightly ask God to bless forms of relationship that according to Scripture God has never decided to bless. For what reasons - in the interests of even-handedness - has there been no engagement to date with this and other critiques, and will there be a response to Dr Davie in due course?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There has been engagement with critiques and different perspectives in the process of producing the paper. However, it is the view of the House at this point that the PLF offer a blessing on people (as indeed is the case with other forms of blessing, always conferred on people). Blessing is the posture of God towards all creation, and, in Scripture, is not conditional on creaturely behaviour or response, as the paper produced for the College of Bishops on the LLF Hub argues (this was a paper requested by, and produced for, the College and it does not represent the views of any one individual).

Following this logic, it is possible to offer a blessing to a couple coming forward wanting to grow in their life with God. Congregational blessings, for instance, are never given subject to certain conditions being fulfilled by the people being blessed; nor does the church assess wedding couples for worthiness to be blessed.

GS 2328 speaks of the diversity of views that are held within the Church in relation to a range of views that touch on the areas of marriage and sexual intimacy. The House of Bishops also contains this diversity of views and does not compel its members to go against their conscience in what they say or don't say. We are not changing the doctrine of the Church regarding marriage, but we are exploring the space for a genuine, careful pastoral response: the kind of response that genuinely rejoices at the goods that we can see in same-sex relationships – faithfulness, stability, fruitfulness, love, faith, grace – and keeps looking for where God is at work, and how we may respond faithfully to God's call to holiness in the fashioning of our lives, rather than focus primarily on identifying the absence of virtue, or good, in others.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey: I thank the Bishop for her response and note that the third paragraph is, in fact, part of an answer to another question entirely. But I also note that the first two paragraphs of the Bishop's reply do not actually answer my question. She has simply restated the rather flimsy theological rationale for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* given in Annex H of GS 2328. My question is, once again, why has there been no engagement by the Bishops with the arguments of Martin Davie on what can and cannot be blessed, and can this Synod please have a response from the House to Dr Davie?

The Bishop of London: I have to say that, for me, the engagement in theology has been challenging. I also think that, actually, engaging in the theology around blessings has enriched me. Certainly, within the House, material has been made available around what it is that we do when we bless and, certainly, individuals have engaged with a difference of theological perception. A whole raft of information has been obtained and it is very difficult to say all these bits we have done because, actually, different members of the House have engaged with different parts. Let us not underestimate the way in which the House has engaged. Of course, the House sometimes is not a whole; it is individual peoples. My belief is that we have engaged with the different theological views around what is it that we do with blessing and, certainly, that has provided a foundation for how we have got to where we are.

67. *Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In Annex A to GS 2328 (*Prayers of Love and Faith - A Basis for Moving Forward*), para 29 says of the process for approval of the proposed "standalone services" under the Canon B 2 procedure that, "The procedure for liturgical business also provides opportunities for the revision of the draft liturgical text". Will this "draft liturgical text" include some or all of the *Prayers of Love and Faith: Resources Section*?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As Annex D of GS 2328 indicates, it is the service structures and Notes which are to be submitted for approval under Canon B 2.

Mr Christopher Townsend: Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your confirmation and clarification. As the House of Bishops, mindful of possible legal risks, proposed to use Canon B 2 to provide the firmest footing for those who propose to use the standalone services, on what basis did the House of Bishops conclude that the actual content of those services should not be incorporated within the Canon B 2 process?

The Bishop of London: As we said previously, we do not believe that the prayers are indicative of a change of the doctrine of marriage in anything essential. We have spent some time considering the way in which the suite of *Prayers* would be commended. That is where the difference is. What we recognise is that the concern that people raise to us is the concern that, putting together one or two prayers, when does it become a standalone service or not, and the concern of people. Therefore, we have talked about that.

We have spent a lot of time listening to those who have been fearful as individuals of legal challenge. As I say, we have tried to thread it through. It is very unfortunate that in a response where we are trying to provide a pastoral response that we are creating an environment of fear. The idea of the *Prayers*, and the standalone service, was around being able to allow same-sex couples in Church to ask for God's blessing and to be thankful. Within it, one of the sadnesses for me is the way we have tried to create fear, particularly, for example, from legal challenge. The House of Bishops absolutely wants

to protect individuals and, therefore, we have thought very carefully about the way in which reassurance is thread right the way through, including the forms of commendation and authorization.

Mr Christopher Townsend: Thank you, Bishop. May I ask you how Canon B 2 ---

The Chair: I am sorry, you have asked your question.

Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield): I believe that questioners are allowed two supplementaries.

The Chair: You are allowed one per question, thank you.

68. *Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS Misc 1339, which was circulated to General Synod in January 2023, contained the following novel and contested claim: “Because the sexes of the parties are irrelevant so far as the general law concept of marriage is concerned, the concept of civil marriage is now of a different nature from the concept of marriage set out in Canon B 30 (Holy Matrimony)”.(para 6). Has the House of Bishops received any subsequent legal advice on the relationship between civil marriage (whether between people of the opposite sex or people of the same-sex) and Holy Matrimony and, if so, when will such advice be disclosed to General Synod?

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 legal and theological basis for proceeding with the *Prayers of Love and Faith* is set out in Annex A to GS 2328.

Mr Christopher Townsend: Since Notice Paper 8, which has emerged today, shows us that the House of Bishops' thinking on the relationship between civil marriage and Holy Matrimony has moved on from the views expressed in GS Misc 1339, and yet the House of Bishops has offered no new legal advice on this question to help General Synod, what consideration has the House of Bishops given to whether the Houses of Laity and Clergy can reach an informed view on questions about same-sex marriage which may be debated in this group of sessions?

The Bishop of London: What we have tried to do in the group of papers is to provide the theological ground on which we are offering these papers. The other piece I would say is, I am almost certain, that members of Synod here have also taken their own view. I would expect members of Synod to have been engaged in this material, but also with each other. We have in our papers tried to outline the foundation upon which we are proposing to commend the Prayers, and to have the standalone services, and where the *Pastoral Guidance* has come from.

69. *Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 para 22 talks of a desire for “change but without changing the doctrine of the

Church". If the doctrine of the Church is remaining unchanged, what did the House of Bishops agree to be the nature of the change that is wanted?

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 PLF and accompanying work have sought to explore the widest possible space we can occupy as a church without changing our doctrine of marriage, while being faithful to the desire for change and the need to embody repentance for the way in which LGBTQI+ people have been treated. As such, the PLF do not represent a change in doctrine, but a change in how doctrine and pastoral practice relate to one another. Pastoral Provision seeks to offer a theological space that affirms what we can affirm together – such as essential goods or virtues – but remains provisional on what we disagree on, and recognises that different churches and ministers will interpret these things in different ways.

70. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for sharing more of your workings in the *Living in Love and Faith* Report GS 2328. This report refers to transparency 12 times, honesty seven times and integrity six times, mostly through reference to the practice of churches. In keeping with these references, at what date will the House of Bishops be releasing the full *Pastoral Guidance*, formal proposals for pastoral assurance, the legal advice that it has received, and the advice of the Faith and Order Commission?

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 full *Pastoral Guidance* will be released as soon as possible. It is hoped this may be in time for the February 2024 meeting of General Synod.

The way the *Pastoral Guidance* has been put together envisions it as an evolving document, so that new questions and answers to more complex questions can be incorporated over time.

Legal advice obtained by the House of Bishops is not normally disclosed. This is to enable the House to obtain full and frank legal advice in confidence.

The Faith and Order Commission has not written a formal paper of advice to the House, but they are working towards doing so. Whether this is released more widely will be at the discretion of the House of Bishops.

Mr Chris Gill: We are one Church. We are one body. We have one aim of getting the legal advice. I can well understand why the House of Bishops would want to discuss it in confidence, but why do they want to obtain the legal advice in confidence?

The Bishop of London: In terms of GS 2328, those papers are based on the legal advice that we have received and also the theological discussions that we have had, which has also been informed by FAOC.

The Revd Paul Bradbury (Salisbury): Given the importance and the scale and the complexity and the urgency around the drafting of the *Pastoral Guidance*, can I ask what level of resource, perhaps in terms of full-time equivalent posts, has been dedicated to drafting it?

The Bishop of London: I can get you those figures. I could not tell you off the top of my head.

71. *Dr Neil Burgess (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Pastoral Principles* are intended to be embedded in our life as a Church, and include the exhortation to “pay attention to power”. What work has the House of Bishops undertaken to consider how well this has been enacted in the deliberations of the House, its communication with Synod, and the level of transparency around the presentation of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and new *Pastoral Guidance*?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Pastoral Principles* have undergirded the conversations on LLF within the House of Bishops, and they have been regularly repeated there. The House has also committed to bring its work to Synod and to consult with Synod, which it did at the meeting in July and is doing again now in November. There has been genuine listening to one another in the House, even when the views of members remain deeply opposed, and there has been no intention to exploit any perceived or real power in consulting with Synod, whose views are earnestly sought to inform the work. As such, not only has the LLF team engaged at the Synod meetings, but also on separate occasions, with stakeholder groups and those with significantly differing views on the PLF and the *Pastoral Guidance*.

Dr Neil Burgess: Noting your references to the House of Bishops consulting and engaging with Synod, please can you summarise any discussion that took place within the House of Bishops regarding the extent to which their apparent disregard for the motion passed in February, specifically paragraph (g), might be viewed by the rest of this Synod as an abuse of power?

The Bishop of London: We have not disregarded it. The papers that we offer today, and our discussions, have been shaped by the motion passed in February.

72. *Dr Neil Burgess (York)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 Annex A para 17 notes: ‘We have also been advised that it would be difficult to say that making the PLF available for same-sex couples without there being an assumption as to their sexual relationships was not indicative of any departure from the Church’s doctrine’. Given that this appears to be a contradiction of the final paragraph of the motion agreed in February, in what sense does the House of Bishops understand these prayers to be an “implementation” of that motion rather than an undermining of it?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House considers that it should heed the terms of the Church's Canons in exercising their collegial episcopal role in relation to matters of doctrine, liturgy and pastoral practice. Under Canon B 5, a minister may use forms of service which the minister considers suitable provided they are "neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter". It would not make sense for the House to proceed on the basis that the discretion of ministers in the conduct of public prayer was narrower than provided for in the Canons.

Dr Neil Burgess: Following up your use of the phrase "in any essential matter", and referring to the six times in GS 2328 where churches that use the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are encouraged to do so joyfully, what consideration has the House of Bishops given this year to encouraging other joyful departures from the doctrine of the Church of England, whether on an essential matter or otherwise?

The Chair: Sir, I do not believe that is strictly relevant to the question, I am sorry. I believe there was a supplementary here. Can you come to the microphone, please?

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford): Can I just remind you, Bishop of London, that paragraph (g) of the motion that we passed in February was passed in all three Houses according to the wording there, and that wording did not include the words, "in any essential matter". That wording did not refer to Canon B 5. Insofar as the House of Bishops tells us that they are seeking to implement that decision, the wider ---

The Chair: I am sorry, can you get to your question, please?

Mr Daniel Matovu: I am getting to the question, Chair. It is this. Why did the House think that they could disregard the actual wording of paragraph (g)?

The Bishop of London: I think it is fair to say that we are not changing the doctrine of marriage, but what we are looking at is to see how the doctrine is applied in a pastoral response in a time of uncertainty. The House spent some time discussing the relationship between doctrine, teaching and pastoral response. What we have done is been very clear that we are not changing the doctrine of marriage but what we are doing is providing a pastoral response at this time.

73. *Ms Gill Frigerio (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Who made the proposal to introduce the standalone services under Canon B 2?

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 proposal that the standalone PLF services should be introduced in the General Synod for approval under Canon B 2 was a collective decision of the House of Bishops. Different routes of authorization, including B 2, have been under discussion throughout the implementation phase of the project.

74. *The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: GS 2328 Annex A, paragraph 23 says that the House considers that, “what is envisaged by way of pastoral provision [in the *Prayers of Love and Faith*] ... is a new insight into doctrine that can be reflected in forms of worship”. Into which doctrine or doctrines did the House consider this provision to be a new insight, and what is the new insight they considered it to be?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: LLF was a process of discernment about our theology, our pastoral frameworks and how we relate to one another in the area of sexuality and marriage. The outcome of several years of discernment is not a clear majority for change, nor is it a clear majority for no change. As a result, the PLF and accompanying work have sought to explore the widest possible space we can occupy as a Church without changing our doctrine of marriage, while being faithful to the desire for change and the need to embody repentance for the way in which LGBTQI+ people have been treated. As such, the PLF do not represent a change in doctrine, but a change in how doctrine and pastoral practice relate to one another. Pastoral Provision seeks to offer a theological space that affirms what we can affirm together - such as essential goods or virtues - but remains provisional on what we disagree on, and recognises that different churches and ministers will interpret these things in different ways.

75. *The Revd Neil Barber (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The 2007 Synod motion was clear that Synod did not want the Church of England to do “anything that could be perceived as the Church of England qualifying its commitment to the entirety of the relevant Lambeth Conference Resolutions (1978: 10; 1988: 64; 1998: 1.10)”. What work has been done in the deliberations of the House of Bishops since July to ensure that this decision is honoured?

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 2007 Synod motion that you refer to also said that it: “welcomes the opportunities offered by these Lambeth Resolutions, including for the Church of England to engage in an open, full and Godly dialogue about human sexuality” which has been a key part of the LLF process, where in the words of the 1978 and 1988 resolutions we have “taken seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research”. In the work that has gone on since the February Synod, we have not sought to change the doctrine of marriage as received by the Church and have been in contact with the Anglican Communion about the work we are doing, noting the need for the ACC to monitor this work in Resolution 1.10.

76. *Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the Chair of the House of Bishops confirm that paragraph 7 of GS Misc 1353 is wholly accurate?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. Paragraph 7 slightly

condenses what happened. As in answer to questions 42-45, the House of Bishops took the substantive decisions and the papers were finalised by the Chairs of the *Living in Love and Faith* Steering Group based on this feedback, and noting the diversity of opinions held by the bishops.

77. *Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Can the Chair of the House of Bishops confirm that the second sentence of paragraph 15 of GS 2328 is wholly accurate?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Yes.

78. *Mr Robin Hall (Europe)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In February and in July, I asked 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. Thank you for your answer that this will be considered by the Pastoral Consultative Group in due course. In the meantime, what work has been undertaken to assess the number of clergy who lost their home and/or income?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: As was said in the answer in July, this is an area that could be considered by the Pastoral Consultative Group. There has not been any preliminary work done ahead of this.

Mr Robin Hall: When the Pastoral Consultative Group does begin its work could it consider the needs of clergy in Europe where in some countries - Portugal, for example - a UK civil partnership has limited or no weight in law and clergy in same-sex relationships have to choose between a civil marriage, with potential impact on their permission to officiate, or having no legal protections for them and their partner?

The Bishop of London: I am happy to ask them to do that.

79. *The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the theological rationale for continuing to promote *Issues in Human Sexuality* as the primary sexual ethic for clergy in the Church of England, including, for example, requiring all prospective ordinands to live within its guidelines?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Those involved in the discernment process, as well as TEIs, need a framework within which to work with candidates and ordinands. *Issues* has been used as a guide though it is not in itself guidance and was not intended for that purpose. We recognise there is a need for a replacement document, and we hope to be able to agree this as a matter of great urgency. A draft of part 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance* is being developed for this purpose.

This is done in collaboration with those involved in the discernment process and in ministerial training to identify what is needed for a coherent, fair and functional framework to replace *Issues* in a way that would be flexible and responsive. Consultation has happened with people of different theological traditions and lived experience. In addition to *Pastoral Guidance*, a Pastoral Consultative Group will be set up to ensure that urgent, complex or new questions that may arise can be explored, people supported in their local contexts, and guidance updated as needed.

80. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The report of findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013 *From Anecdote to Evidence* was written before the start of *Living in Love and Faith* and does not address sex or marriage directly. But the report includes as a factor for growth: "Quality of preaching – confidence in the Gospel and teaching". What evidence of Church growth has the House of Bishops considered in relation to "*Living in Love and Faith*"?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is not possible to assess the impact on Church growth of *Living in Love and Faith* before implementation of what was agreed at the February Synod. However, consideration has been given to the potential issues and opportunities for mission by the Church following the implementation of what is proposed. Our view is that there is not enough evidence yet to determine an answer to your question.

Mr Richard Denno: Thank you for your answer concerning data relating the issues of LLF and Church growth. Could the House of Bishops please confirm that they have considered churchmodel.org.uk where there is data analysed which shows that no Christian denomination that has considered issues of same-sex marriage, or has changed its practice regarding that, none of those have grown?

The Bishop of London: I do not know your website, I cannot do it, but what I can say is the House of Bishops did commission some work to look at the way in which these changes have been implemented in other parts of the world. There was no clear pattern in the evidence in terms of the impact on Church growth. What is clear is around the way in which the Church handled the decisions.

The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham): In relation to the supplementary just asked and the question already, if that is allowed, are the House of Bishops able to ensure that the evidence that they refer to when looking at these things is unbiased and the source is neutral?

The Bishop of London: What the House does is recognise when we are looking at data where it comes from. It is very hard to get neutral and unbiased. What we do is we look at the context and so, having gathered the evidence, it is clear where the evidence has been gathered from.

81. *Mr Tim Hamilton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: LLF has brought up a number of questions around the relationship between the Church and Parliament. With this in mind, what work has been done to explore the implications of increased political pressure and questions around disestablishment?

The Bishop of St Albans (The Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The National Church Institutions are in regular contact with the Government, especially the Cabinet Office, about a wide range of matters.

To date, there has been no request to discuss the establishment of the Church of England. Constitutional matters relating to the Church of England are regularly reviewed by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners, but no such assessment regarding the continued establishment of the Church has been undertaken.

82. *The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing was made an Act of Synod at the February 2020 Group of Sessions, and included the statement: "Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, we as the Church of England commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households in terms expressed in the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing".

In the light of this, what plans have the House of Bishops put in place to address the increased stress caused to parochial clergy by the "time of uncertainty" that has been created by the PLF process as it has been conducted?

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 "time of uncertainty" that is spoken of reflects the reality of an uncertain time with its lack of consensus over the last six years, rather than creates uncertainty in itself. The *Pastoral Guidance* sets out a number of ways in which dioceses can support clergy as the PLF are made available in parts 1 and 2. Those from different traditions will have different views and different dilemmas regarding the PLF, and, as the *Pastoral Guidance* states, it is appropriate that support should be designed and offered at local level, in ways that attend to context and specificity.

Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough): Is it the case that parochial clergy stress has been deliberately heightened by conservative pressure groups which have sought to manufacture concerns and spread fear over the optional use of the prayers for political purposes?

The Chair: This does create argument and imputation and so it is out of order, I am sorry.

83. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Following meetings of the College and House of Bishops, the text and structure of the *Prayers of*

Love and Faith have been refined into three parts. Two of those parts are (i) Prayers for Covenanted Friendships and (ii) Prayers for same-sex couples. Prayers for Covenanted Friendships have been separated out as they celebrate relationships that, by their nature, are different from those celebrated in the rest of the *Prayers*: “the prayers for covenanted friendships are intended for a pastoral context that is different from the other parts of the PLF”. The inclusion of covenanted friendships in the *Prayers of Love and Faith* is said “to reflect the importance of deep friendship, particularly in a world in which commitment is often associated only with sexual relationships” and “covenanted friendships embody a type of relationship that is both committed and non-sexual, which is not exclusive, yet deeply meaningful, particular, and seeking to grow in holiness”. Also separated out are prayers for same-sex couples. This suite of resources is for use “in private pastoral prayer or within existing regular worship within parishes”. This second suite of resources has been separated out from prayers for covenanted relationships because the relationships with which the latter are concerned are committed and non-sexual. The clear implication is that the prayers for same-sex couples are for couples whose relationship is both committed and sexual. Is it a correct reading of GS 2328 that the House of Bishops are commending the second suite of prayers for use with sexually active same-sex couples?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Prayers for Covenanted Friendship centre on relationships of a different type, which are by definition non-sexual. The PLF offered to same-sex couples make no assumption about the physical nature of their relationship, but concentrate on celebrating the goods of these relationship, their desire to grow in faith and love, and to seek God’s blessing.

Mr Daniel Matovu: For the avoidance of any doubt, can the House confirm whether or not they are sanctioning the use of the PLF for same-sex couples who are in a sexually active relationship?

The Bishop of London: What we have said is that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* make no assumption about the physical nature of relationship, but what they are doing is they concentrate on celebrating the goods within these relationships and the individual's desire to growing faith and love and to seek God's blessing.

84. *The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What feedback on GS 2328 has been sought from those most likely to avail themselves of what is offered by the proposed “pastoral provision”, both Christian and non-Christian?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The drafting of both the prayers and the *Pastoral Guidance* has been an iterative process involving members of the LGBTQI+ Christian community. The drafting process has not involved those outside of the Christian community. The work of LLF, however, has engaged with wider societal views, scientific views and those of other religions, as detailed in the LLF book.

85. *The Revd Timothy Edwards (Rochester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Bishop of London was widely quoted in the press as saying with regard to blessings for same-sex couples, “These are difficult decisions. They will always be difficult decisions. I think our view is that this time of uncertainty is helpful in recognising that pastoral provision needs to be made, as, whilst individuals may be certain, the Church is not” (e.g. *Church Times*, 20 October 2023).

In saying “whilst individuals may be certain, the Church is not”, was this intended to reflect a purely personal opinion (perhaps indicated by the words “I think...”) or does this reflect the official position of the House of Bishops?

If the latter, when and by what process did the official position of the Church become “uncertain”?

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 nature of the time of uncertainty for the Church is explored in detail by section 1 of Annex H in GS 2328.

86. *Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How many Anglican priests in the Church of England have married their same-sex partner?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Some dioceses may hold records of clergy who have married their same-sex partner but the information has not been collected by the Church nationally.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: Can Bishop Sarah confirm whether the House of Bishops is aware that there are already clergy in the Church of England who have entered into same-sex marriages?

The Bishop of London: I cannot confirm or deny that because I have not asked the House of Bishops.

Ms Jayne Ozanne: Okay. There are.

87. *Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When the Church teaches that sexual intimacy outside of marriage is forbidden, what physical act(s) does it specifically have in mind?

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 *Living in Love and Faith* process has always sought to recognise that the expression of sexual intimacy between two people cannot be reduced to a small set of defined actions.

Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield): Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer. We have both previously worked as healthcare professionals and in those roles would not have used euphemisms such as “sexual intimacy” as they would be unhelpful. What is the rationale for not talking about sex using correct and clear language, given that it is so crucial to our discussions?

The Bishop of London: What we have been trying to do is to provide a pastoral response. For all my love of the Health Service, it is very easy to use terminology that begins to medicalise and individual. What we are doing is providing a pastoral response in this time of uncertainty and, therefore, I think it would be unhelpful to have a long list of different categories and definitions, which is why we have used the term “sexual intimacy”.

Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely): Bishop Sarah, would you be able to confirm whether sexual intimacy would not only be the physical act but also the intention behind it, coming from where Jesus referred to when someone looks on lustfully they are committing adultery in their hearts in the context of sex outside marriage?

The Bishop of London: I think what you raise is the complexity of the nature of this discussion and, therefore, what we have tried to do is to provide a pastoral response rather than one that tries to categorise people in certain ways. We have been trying to promote being gracious and pastoral at this time.

88. *Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Does the Church of England recognise all civil marriages conducted in the presence of a Registrar as marriages?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Church of England recognises all civil marriages as conferring the status of marriage in secular law. The Church’s law and doctrine remain that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. The Faith and Order Commission are undertaking work on the relationship between civil marriage and marriage as understood by the Church (Holy Matrimony). The PLF, without conflating same-sex relationships with the state of Holy Matrimony, affirm the very clear goods in those relationships that bear a family resemblance to the goods of marriage: stability, faithfulness, exclusive, lifelong commitment, fruitfulness, mutual nurture and work for the flourishing of each partner and all those with whom a couple comes into contact.

Ms Rebecca Mynett: In the light of that answer, and given that we established earlier in answer to a supplementary on question 61 that secular civil marriage and canonical church marriage are different things, is it the case that liturgical affirmation of a secular civil marriage cannot contravene Canon B 30 on Holy Matrimony as Canon B 30 only relates to canonical church marriage?

The Bishop of London: I think what I want to do is, first of all, correct you and maybe get the answer sent to you. I want to correct you. I said that there are commonalities between

the two and they are overlapping but not the same nature, and I think that is important to say. But I will get the detail of the response to you from somebody who could articulate it better than I.

89. *Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is it Church of England doctrine that it is lawful for bishops, priests and deacons to marry at their own discretion?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Article 32 of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion states:

“Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.”

The reference to marriage in Article 32 is a reference to marriage as defined by the Church's law and doctrine, namely the union of one man and one woman.

90. *The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In Annex A of GS 2328 (*Prayers of Love and Faith - A Basis for Moving Forward*) it is stated in paragraph 24 that the pastoral provision being offered “would stand in a long line of the pastoral practice of finding ways to help people move forward in holiness in a world that falls far short of any ideals, without giving up on the idea of the ideal altogether”. Given that holiness in the Church's “unchanged doctrine of marriage” (paragraph 15) sees marriage between one man and one woman as the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy, what consideration has the House of Bishops given to how the *Prayers of Love and Faith* will help a same-sex couple who are sexually intimate “move forward” towards this vision of holiness?

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 concept of Pastoral Provision, as it has developed over many years, seeks to recognise what is good, faithful and holy and encourage these virtues to developed further. Acknowledging the value of, and celebrating, faithfulness, commitment, fruitfulness, mutual love, is the initial step, and praying for growth in these aspects of their relationship represents growth in holiness.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey: I am sure we all want to help each other “move forward” in holiness, as suggested in GS 2328. As Leviticus 11 has it, and here I am channelling my inner Andrew Cornes, “I am the Lord, your God, be holy because I am holy”. Have Bishops discussed, and are they of one mind on, what holiness looks like in the context of the Church's unchanged doctrine of marriage and, in particular, in the context of the Church's unchanged teaching that marriage between a man and a woman is the only proper place for sexual activity?

The Bishop of London: Yes, we have talked about holiness and what holiness would look like. There is a recognition that none of us are actually holy. There is a recognition that all of us are sinful seeking to walk the way of Christ. As I said before, in terms of Scripture that, just in the same way as the breadth of the Church of England and this Synod as it is in the House, Bishops would have read Scripture differently. They would have read it but they would interpret it differently.

91. *Mrs Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Please can the House of Bishops explain how the statements contained in paragraph 17 of Annex A to GS 2328 interact with the established position of the Church of England that opposite sex couples who have had sex prior to marriage are permitted to marry in a Church of England church using a form of authorized public liturgy, including those couples in respect of whom it would not be unreasonable to conclude that they are (or have been) in a sexually active relationship due to the presence of their joint children at the wedding service?

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 doctrine of marriage has never been considered to prevent the solemnisation of matrimony of a couple who have already had sexual relations. The solemnisation does not condone the couple's previous situation; it creates a new relationship which is blessed by the Church and within which it is now appropriate for the couple's relationship to be a sexual one. It is not, therefore, indicative of any departure from doctrine, and it would be a misinterpretation of what the Church was doing to see it in those terms.

The House of Bishops previously considered that the Church's doctrine of marriage prevented public liturgies for same-sex couples who might not be living in accordance with the Church's teaching. If moving away from that position is "indicative of any departure from" the Church's doctrine of marriage, we do not think it is a departure from doctrine "in any essential matter" for the reasons we have set out. Any change is confined to the understanding of what that doctrine prevents or permits in terms of pastoral provision; it would be a misinterpretation to see this pastoral provision, which responds to the reality of people's lives, as an alteration to the doctrine of marriage itself.

92. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Bishop of London responded to the written Q64 in July 2023 Group of sessions that "the people in a marriage [where one has transitioned] are still the same people". Did this mean that it remains a marriage because it remains a union between one man and one woman?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: "Marriage" cannot be reduced to simply one of its components; while marriage is defined as the union of one man and one woman, it also covers legal status, and a multiplicity of "goods" that can be identified and celebrated, as well as a thick pattern of interwoven relationships and memories. In addition, the

human person cannot simply be reduced to their sex or gender. The person who entered a marriage, then transitions, is a human person in all their fullness, in all aspects of their life. The marriage they contracted when they contracted it was both legal and recognised in the eyes of the Church, and as such, unless they divorce, still remains marriage between the two people who entered it. These persons remain complex, multifaceted individuals, and their marriage is constituted by many more characteristics than simply sex or gender.

93. *Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In response to a written question I raised in the February 2023 group of sessions (Question 148), the Bishop of London stated: “the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* are silent on the question of sexual intimacy. While not explicitly stated in the Church’s Canons, for many years the Church has taught that the only rightful place for sexual activity is Holy Matrimony. The House of Bishops has not retracted this but acknowledges that there is disagreement in the Church about how this applies today. As part of developing the *Pastoral Guidance* bishops will need to clarify this situation”. The *Living in Love and Faith* motion of February 2023 provided under clause (g) that the General Synod “endorse 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” (which was not further qualified by the words “in any essential matter”).

In GS 2328 it is stated that the House of Bishops has been advised that “it would be difficult to say that making the PLF available for same-sex couples without there being an assumption as to their sexual relationships was not indicative of any departure from the Church’s doctrine. Existing pastoral statements of the House of Bishops (issued in 2005, 2014 and 2019) state that because some same-sex couples will be “living consistently with the teaching of the Church, others not”, it would “not be right to produce an authorized public liturgy in connection with the registering of [civil partnerships/same-sex marriages] and “that clergy of the Church of England should not provide services of blessing for those who [register a civil partnership/enter a same-sex marriage]”. If the PLF are to be available for same-sex couples without there being an assumption as to their sexual relationships, there would have been a change in the Church’s formal position on what its doctrine of marriage, and the place of sex within it, did and did not preclude in terms of public worship. Such a change might indicate a departure from the previous understanding that the Church’s teaching precluded public worship being offered for a same-sex couple who were or might be in a sexually active relationship.”

While it is said that the draft PLF being commended by the House of Bishops make no assumptions with regards to sexual intimacy, has the House of Bishops given consideration to the situation where it is known or has been disclosed that a same-sex couple are in a sexually active relationship and, if so, what conclusion did the House come to as to whether it would be appropriate for the PLF to be available to same-sex couples who are known to be in a sexually active relationship in light of the advice given as stated above, and having proper regard to the strict wording of clause (g) of the *Living in Love*

and Faith motion of February 2023, excluding as it does the words “in any essential matter”

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The PLF are designed to celebrate all that is good and holy in a relationship, and to encourage and support a couple in growing in holiness and seeking God’s blessing. The PLF are a pastoral provision to answer a need among the people of God. They do not seek to change doctrine, but they do represent a different way to articulate the relationship between doctrine and pastoral practice.

The position with regard to same-sex couples in a sexually active relationship is covered by paragraphs 16 to 26 of GS 2328. For the basis on which we have chosen not to fetter the minister’s discretion in accordance paragraph (g) of February’s motion, I refer to the answer I gave to Dr Neil Burgess at Question 70.

Mr Daniel Matovu: You refer to paragraphs 16 to 26 of GS 2328. Paragraph 22 says that the Church’s teaching on sexual activity is regarded as part of the doctrine of marriage and that the PLF are intended to respect that doctrine. How then can the PLF be commended to same-sex couples known to be in a sexually active relationship without the need to repent?

The Bishop of London: What the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are doing are seeking to bless that which is good within those relationships. I am almost certain that any heterosexual couple going into a marriage service would want to repent of a number of things, as we all do, because none of us are perfect. The Church and the Synod is not agreed on these items and it is, therefore, our role as a leadership to respond in this time of uncertainty. The *Prayers of Love and Faith* are being proposed to enable couples to give thanks and to ask for God’s blessing on what is good within their relationship. This is a time of uncertainty and this has provided a pastoral response.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): With very grateful thanks, Bishop Sarah, for seeing us through all these questions and many more, would you agree that sex between two individuals of whatever gender is something to be celebrated if it is consensual and if it is done in love?

The Chair: You are asking for her personal opinion and not what the House said and so I am afraid I am going to rule it out.

This draws to an end the questions on LLF. We come now to question 94.

CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION

94. *The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Please list, by date and See, the announced CNC appointments since the start of this Synod (November 2021).

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commissions:

Bishop of Salisbury: announced 13.01.22
Bishop of Rochester: announced 31.03.22
Bishop of Bath & Wells: announced 28.04.22
Bishop of Liverpool: announced 18.10.22
Bishop of Newcastle: announced 20.10.22
Bishop of Blackburn: announced 10.01.23
Bishop of Lincoln: announced 24.05.23
Bishop of Winchester: announced 06.07.23
Bishop of Birmingham: announced 30.08.23
Bishop of Peterborough: announced 28.09.23

95. *The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Please list the current vacant Sees (and if possible, known upcoming vacant Sees - where a translation has already been announced, or a retirement is already announced) and the expected timeline for CNC meetings and appointment.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commissions:

Bishop of Carlisle:	Shortlisting: 7 Nov 23	Interviews: 13 & 14 Dec 23
Bishop of Sodor & Man:	Shortlisting: 17 Jan 24	Interviews: 13 & 14 Mar 24
Bishop of Exeter:	Shortlisting: 29 Feb 24	Interviews: 9 & 10 Apr 24
Bishop of Ely:	Shortlisting: 13 May 24	Interviews: 11 & 12 Jul 24
Bishop of Coventry:	Shortlisting: 26 Jun 24	Interviews: 11 & 12 Sep 24
Bishop of Truro:	Shortlisting: 6 Sep 24	Interviews: 15 & 16 Oct 24
Bishop of Durham:	Shortlisting: 11 Oct 24	Interviews: 26 & 27 Nov 24

Announcements are made once all the necessary checks have taken place and approval has been granted from the Crown. The Prime Minister's office then makes the announcement.

96. *Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: It is common practice across the country for Vacancy in See Committees to depart from the regulations in how they are administered. What is being done to monitor this and address any discordance between regulation and reality?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: We are not aware of any departure from the outworking of the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation. The operation of Vacancy in See Committees is the responsibility of individual dioceses, supported by the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments.

Mr Luke Appleton: I can assure you that there is widespread departure from the regulations across the country in the implementation of Vacancy in See Committees, and so my question is: is this something that, please, could be investigated?

The Archbishop of York: Luke, you are going to have to let us know what these widespread departures from practice are. I would encourage you, please, to write to Stephen Knott, who is The Archbishop of Canterbury and I's Secretary to the Crown Nominations Commission. It is impossible for me to respond when I do not know what it is particularly you are referring to and so, if you write to him, we will certainly look into that.

97. *Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Please describe what consultation, if any, is undertaken with the Crown Nominations Commission prior to the appointment of an Acting Bishop by an instrument of delegation under s.14 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: No consultation takes place with the Crown Nominations Commission on this matter. Outgoing diocesan bishops are encouraged to consult with the Archbishop of the Province on the appointment of an "acting diocesan bishop" for the interregnum. Circumstances in dioceses will vary, as will the level of potential challenge and complexity facing an acting diocesan bishop holding the diocese during the interregnum. As such, consultation with the relevant Archbishop is important to ensure that a candidate is chosen who has the appropriate gifts, qualities, skills and experience to lead the diocese at this moment of transition.

98. *Professor Helen King (Oxford)* asked the Crown Nominations Commission: It is on record that three pairs of central CNC members come from traditions which do not believe that women should be diocesan bishops. Have those responsible for the CNC process considered how to respect the consciences of these members whilst preventing the voting rules from discriminating against candidates who are women?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Vice Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission The Crown Nominations Commission does not hold data on the Church tradition of its members. As a Commission of the Church of England, it is expected that all Crown Nominations Commission members are committed to the Five Guiding Principles, as set out in the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076). At the start of each meeting, all members of the CNC are reminded that it meets under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help discern

who the next bishop might be. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit is prone to do, members can be surprised by who may end up being appointed, which of course can be someone from outside an individual's tradition.

99. *The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Despite the Church of England, being “fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender” for over 8 years, only 2 out of the last 11 episcopal appointments has been a woman, only 8 out of the 29 episcopal appointments since 2015 have been women and of 42 diocesan bishops, only six are women. What is being done to improve the rates of women appointed to episcopal roles, especially as diocesan bishops?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as *Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission*: The pipeline to senior roles is continually supported and reviewed to encourage and ensure the greatest possible participation of underrepresented groups in senior appointment processes. Since 2015, of the 67 suffragan appointments made (excluding 4 PEVs), 32 were women (48%). We recognise and share the concerns that, whilst there has been progress with the appointment of suffragan bishops, there is clearly further work to be done on diocesan appointments.

The Revd Kate Massey (Coventry): Archbishop, thank you for your answer to this question and also to the one that follows, both of which make it clear that more work is needed to be done to achieve gender equality in the appointment of diocesan bishops. I was wondering who would be responsible for this work and when might we see it undertaken?

The Archbishop of York: It is a really good question and I do not in any way want to appear complacent. I do, however, want to take the opportunity to rejoice in the number of suffragan appointments that have been made because there is, indeed, now for me a very encouraging gender balance across the Church. But you are absolutely right, and as I hope I have said as undefensively as I can in my answer, more work needs to be done. Where that work is done is a much harder one to know the answer to, though I can assure you a number of us are giving it a lot of thought and consideration. But these are decisions that are made by the Crown Nominations Commission, 12 of whose members are elected by this General Synod - six, the 12 pairs. This is something that we need to reflect on in a number of different areas in the Church, and if you have any ideas about how we might do that, I would be really, really glad to receive them.

100. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: The Church has pledged itself to conducting its affairs as though the Equality Act applied in full (assurance given from the Platform in Women Bishops debate July 2014). Yet since October 2021, of the 11 diocesan bishops appointed only two have been women.

Have the processes and membership of the CNC been professionally and independently audited to ensure that there is no inbuilt discrimination?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: The Crown Nominations Commission was comprehensively reviewed in the previous quinquennium of the General Synod. On the appointment of diocesan bishops, the CNC process works within the parameters set by General Synod. Within those parameters, the Archbishops' Appointments and Vocations team continually strive to ensure potential barriers to underrepresented groups are mitigated. Since 2015, of the 67 suffragan appointments made (excluding 4 PEVs), 32 were women (48%). We recognise and share the concerns that, whilst there has been progress with the appointment of suffragan bishops, there is clearly further work to be done on diocesan appointments.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin: In your reply, you talk about not having any inbuilt discrimination in the processes, yet our process allows people to stand for the CNC who explicitly declare that they will not elect women as bishops. Can we please have our processes brought back for reassessment so that we do not have that inbuilt discrimination in future?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: That will no doubt happen at some point. I have to say it was the General Synod who decided on those processes and not the Crown Nominations Commission, but I fully take your point.

101. *Professor Joyce Hill (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: Would the House of Bishops commit itself to auditing and amending the CNC voting process to give women an equal chance of being nominated as diocesan bishops?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: The voting processes for the nomination of candidates by the Crown Nominations Commission was reviewed in 2015 by Professor Iain McLean, Professor of Politics, Oxford University and Vice- President for Public Policy, British Academy. In itself, the CNC voting process does not prevent women (or any other underrepresented groups) being nominated to diocesan Sees. However, it is not for the House of Bishops to audit and amend the CNC voting process, it is the role of the General Synod, who also elect the Central Members of the CNC.

102. *Mrs Dawn Brathwaite (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: For each of the years 2019-2023 inclusive, can you confirm the composition of the permanent members of the CNC according to gender, the number of appointments made to the post of diocesan bishop made for each of those years, and for each year's appointment the number of females?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: We have taken “Permanent Members” to mean the six Central Members (or their stand-ins), the two Archbishops (or their stand-ins) and the Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary and the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments (the Secretaries are non-voting).

The make-up of the members varies by appointment due to the need for stand-ins and also the changes of both Appointment Secretaries and of the Central Members. There is no consistency of permanent membership across vacancies, even within the same year.

Women amongst the Permanent Members of the CNC by year:

(including the Secretaries who are non-voting)

Year	Appointments – Women	Appointments – Men	Permanent Members of the CNC – Women*
2019	0	3	Between 4 – 5
2020	1	1	Between 3 – 5
2021	0	2	Between 4 – 5
2022	1	3	Between 3 – 6
2023	1	4	Between 4 – 6

*Out of a total of 10 Permanent Members

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Would the Archbishop confirm that, of the 12 persons elected to the Commission by General Synod in 2022, as part of six pairs, eight were women and four of the six clergy elected in their three pairs were women, with the result that normally four of the six elected central members serving on any particular appointment are women and two of them are ordained?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: I have not checked the numbers, but I am sure you will have done and so I am very happy to take your word for it.

103. *Mrs Dawn Brathwaite (Birmingham)* asked the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission: For each of the years 2019-2023 inclusive, can you confirm the composition of the permanent members of the CNC according to ethnicity, the number of appointments made to the post of diocesan bishop in each of those years (if not previously answered), and for each year, how many of these appointments were from individuals who identify as GMH/UKME?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission We have taken “Permanent Members” to mean the six Central Members (or their stand-ins), the two Archbishops (or their stand-

ins) and the Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary and the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments (the Secretaries are non-voting).

The make-up of the members varies by appointment due to the need for stand-ins and also the changes of both Appointment Secretaries and of the Central Members. There is no consistency of permanent membership across vacancies, even within the same year.

UKME/GMH members amongst the Permanent Members of the CNC by year:

(including the Secretaries who are non-voting)

Year	Appointments GMH/UKME	Appointments White	Permanent Members of the CNC – GMH/UKME*
2019	0	3	Between 0 – 1
2020	1	1	Between 0 – 2
2021	0	2	Between 0 – 1
2022	1	3	Between 0 – 1
2023	0	5	Between 0 – 2

*Out of a total of 10 Permanent Members

Over this 5-year period, 16 CNCs were held of which 6 had no GMH/UKME representation within the Permanent Membership of the CNC.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Would the Archbishop confirm that of the 12 persons elected to the Commission by General Synod in 2022 as part of six pairs, 25% were persons of global majority heritage?

The Archbishop of Canterbury: I refer the honourable gentleman to the answer I gave previously.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Synod, for your self-restraint and self-discipline in this set of questions. It is much appreciated. We are going to move on, but I would invite you perhaps to stand and stretch your legs for two minutes before the next item.

THE CHAIR *The Ven. Douglas Dettmer (Exeter)* took the Chair at 6.15 pm

ITEM 5 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PENSIONS BOARD (GS 2324)

The Chair: We return now to the formal business of the Synod for Item 5, the Appointment of the Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board. For this, members will need paper GS 2324. I call on the Archbishop of York to introduce this item. He has up to 10 minutes.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Dear friends, I trust that you will have read GS 2324 and, therefore, I am not going to rehearse all the points that are covered in that paper but, in so doing, you will have read that approval is required from Synod to appoint the Chair of the Church of England's Pensions Board. The motion at Item 5 asks us to approve Clive Mather for a second and final term from 1 May next year to 30 April 2029.

Since being appointed to the role in 2019, Clive has brought a substantial senior management acumen and experience to bear in the role for the good of the pension scheme members and for the wider Church. It is worth remembering that this is an unpaid role and one of the perhaps, we might say, less glamorous unpaid roles at that. It requires - though I say this with a smile, and I imagine Clive is smiling behind me - it says, an estimated 50 days' commitment each year, i.e. about a day a week. But I know, and Clive I am sure knows, that what he does far exceeds this and he has served us with great skill, great dedication and, if I may say, I think a great love for the clergy and for Church workers and for all of us. Perhaps I should have declared an interest at the beginning: I am, I hope, going to get a Church pension one day.

Probably for most of us, the main ways in which we have interacted with Clive has been participating in debates and when he has come to answer Synod questions, which he will be doing again tomorrow. But, just recently, I had the benefit of hearing Clive talk at both the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops on the huge challenges that are facing, well, the whole world of pensions, and particularly the issues that face us. On each occasion, he spoke to us in ways that were informative, understandable - and I particularly want to emphasise "understandable" - for those of us who do not have expertise in these areas.

I know that other members of the Board are hugely grateful for Clive's leadership and his ability to navigate the Government arrangements of the Board, whilst helping the Board to become a global player in the climate change debate. Let us not forget the way the Pensions Board, alongside the Church Commissioners, is having such a significant contribution in those areas as well. There is, as questions tomorrow and other debates show, much to do and much work ahead which Clive and the Pensions Board are committed to carrying out, and we get a little glimpse of that in paragraph 6 of the paper.

Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury and I commend the reappointment of Clive Mather to the role of Chair of the Pensions Board, and I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: This item is now open for debate. The speech limit is up to five minutes. I see no one standing and so the Archbishop is invited to reply to the debate if he wishes to reply. He has up to five minutes.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Yes, well, actually, if there has been no debate, I am not awfully sure I am required to respond it. But I am glad just to say a final personal word, which I did not make in the more formal speech. Clive, I do not want to predict how Synod is going to vote but I have just got a bit of a feeling that you might be about to be re-elected.

I am personally grateful to you, as I think the vote of Synod is about to demonstrate, for your service, your commitment and the way in which you have been alongside us in a very challenging time. I know that, if the Archbishop of Canterbury were able to be here, he would say the same. We are really grateful to you, and we thank you, but perhaps we should reserve any applause until after the vote is taken and that, Chair, is in your hands not mine.

The Chair: I now put Item 5 to the vote.

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

The Chair: This item is now closed. Members will have noticed that we are ahead of time. That will be the last item of business for this evening, and so we will move immediately into evening worship. Please do stay in the chamber for evening prayer, which will be led this evening by representatives from the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

The Synod was led in an act of worship by the Diocese of Bath & Wells

Full Synod: Second Day Tuesday 14 November 2023

THE CHAIR *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* took the Chair at 10.15 am

The Chair: Good morning, Synod. Before we start our proceedings, I would like to invite Canon Robert Hammond, Chair of the Business Committee, to say a few words.

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford): Synod, we are doing very well so far, especially as we covered over 100 questions yesterday, so thank you all for that. However, I am sorry to have to stand up and say something. I reminded members yesterday about Notice Paper 5 order and decorum. Under Standing Order 15(2), a Chair's decision is final and is not open to debate or question. Could I remind Synod that that includes calling out your view on a ruling by the Chair on a point of order or on the admissibility of a supplementary question? May I also add that shouting out during or after speeches is also discouraged? Thank you, Chair.

ITEM 500
SPECIAL AGENDA 1
LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS
ABUSE (REDRESS) MEASURE (GS 2325)

The Chair: We come to our first business. It is Legislative Business, Item 500, the draft Abuse (Redress) Measure. For this you will need GS 2325. This is an item for First Consideration. You will also need Notice Paper 3, paragraphs 6 to 8, which will explain the financial implications.

As with all our business, I should just like to remind Synod that our sessions are public, and also that some survivors are listening online. I would like to call the Bishop of Winchester, Philip Mounstephen, to speak to this motion.

The Bishop of Winchester (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen): Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Synod. Thank you, Synod, for your warm welcome in July, when, together with survivors, we brought before you the work we have begun in developing a national Redress Scheme. Together, we agreed that we must do this as a proper expression of our sincere regret for past failings in safeguarding, and do it well.

Many people in this room have been asking when we will be ready to launch the Redress Scheme. Survivors of abuse have been asking the same. When, they ask, will it be open for applications? Synod, this is up to us. So we bring before you today a draft of a Measure for First Consideration, which together we will all work on in the coming months, in an attempt to convey our heartfelt contrition, and deep repentance, for the failings of the Church. We have harmed many people and allowed many people to be harmed, and we must respond to those people together.

The Measure before us today is not a final product. It is the beginning of the legislative process. The sooner we start, all of us together, the more time and opportunity we will have to scrutinise in detail the ways that the whole of the Church, at every level, can offer this response of repentance and redress. This approach that we are taking today provides an early opportunity to Synod to propose revisions and amendments so that we can ensure that every part of the Church is fully equipped to participate in the scheme.

In Rules which will sit alongside the draft Measure, we will outline the mechanics of the scheme; the ways in which the Measure will be implemented in detail. We need to hear from you this morning, and through the revisions process, so that these Rules can be designed to make sure the scheme works well in practice. Indeed, I am hoping that we will hear from some who will be directly involved in that process in the course of this debate.

There would be no point in the project team, advised by survivors, doing all of the policy work and designing the entire scheme before coming here and only then to begin the legislative process. That would not only add a further year or two before we could open the doors of the scheme but would also present you with a *fait accompli*, which survivors would rightly expect you to approve, but would deny you the reasonable opportunity you might expect to scrutinise and amend the legislation. Hence, we are giving you early sight of the Measure and the opportunity to revise and develop it together.

Since the warm encouragement you gave to the work of the Project Board in July (for which, many thanks) we have gone to market with a procurement process to identify a supplier to deliver the Redress Scheme, and also to help us conclude the technical stages of designing the scheme. We have received some very promising tenders which are in the procurement process at present.

Furthermore, we have devised a funding formula to protect every parish, TEI and any other part of the Church from any apprehension they may have that they will be asked to pay more than we can see is feasible for them. The £150 million of funds allocated by the Church Commissioners will enable us to make financial awards to applicants promptly, and local contributions will be facilitated separately from the awards process. The Church Commissioners will make these funds available as and when needed, when we have made further progress towards launching the Redress Scheme, both here at Synod and in work the Project Board and Project Team are undertaking.

When it comes to financial contributions, clearly a parish's priority is local ministry, in partnership with the diocese. This scheme does not change that. In fact, we are determined to honour this, and we have agreed that a means test in relation to unrestricted funds and a maximum level of financial contribution (a cap if you like) will be implemented along with other protections and provisions outlined in the policy note which you have received along with the draft Measure. This will mean that every parish and local accountable body will be included in the process equitably and fairly, with transparent means tests to be applied consistently. We have designed this to be affordable, and we will set the threshold at reasonable levels to make sure that every parish and local accountable body is treated alike and fairly, and no parish or other local body will be asked to contribute beyond that which the scheme assesses they can reasonably afford.

Let us be clear there is already a risk that claims may be made, but this is a means of enabling us together to manage those claims in a proactive manner, sharing the load between us, and supported by the generosity of the Church Commissioners.

In the coming weeks, we will work on some of the crucial remaining policy points, such as the level of financial awards the scheme will administer to eligible applicants, whether it will introduce a requirement that an eligible applicant receives their financial award as a full and final settlement, whether financial contributions from local bodies should be considered to be mandatory or voluntary, and other crucial matters. Please speak into

these and other matters this morning, and please submit proposals for amendment to the Revision Committee.

One of our lamentable failings, which has made it possible for some people to abuse others while in the Church of England, has been our reluctance to face up to unpalatable truths, and avoid confronting difficult and painful situations openly and candidly. Today, here in public, let us start as we mean to go on, with a transparent and honest conversation about the ways we can deliver the commitment we agreed in July, to develop the Redress Scheme as a proper expression of that regret, and to look forward to its further development. Today, let us take on board collectively our responsibility in this. And let us indeed look forward together as we develop the scheme, listening to and learning from each other, and, crucially, from survivors, so that this scheme will genuinely be co-created and that, as a whole Church, we can in due course express our repentance properly, genuinely and with humility, and in doing so, confront our own failings. We must learn from those failings and determine together to take a better course.

This draft Measure, I believe, gives us the opportunity to do just that. I commend this draft Measure to Synod and move the motion standing in my name. Thank you.

The Chair: I would like to start with a speech limit of five minutes, which will most likely reduce quite quickly as I have quite a few requests to speak.

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I am, of course, in favour of us having a Redress Scheme: we owe it to all those who are being abused. But I am against this motion. This motion is not about whether we think the Redress Scheme is a good idea; it is to send this draft Measure into the Revision Committee. The problem with that is a lot of the policy has not yet been decided. So if it goes into Revision Committee, the Steering Committee will bring forth policy decisions which will then be put into the draft Measure, but we will not have any opportunity to comment on those policy decisions. It will in due course, if it goes into revision, come back before this Synod for revision in full Synod. Yes, we can put down amendments at that stage, but we will not be able to have the detailed consideration which will take place, or should take place, in a Revision Committee, and I think it is likely that we will call for it to be sent back for further revision by the Revision Committee. This has happened before in the Marriage Measure some years ago. If that happens, and it goes back for a second Revision Stage, we will not have gained anything in terms of time. It would be better to start properly when the policy has been decided. We should decide the policy first, then draft the legislation, and then bring it to Synod for First Consideration and send it to Revision Committee.

I urge you to vote against this motion to send this matter to the Revision Committee.

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell): I am also the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding. I am grateful for the work that is in front of us led by Bishop Philip, the Board, the Victims and Survivors Working Group and the wider team. As we move from the broad picture that was outlined at the July Synod to this working version, which has

been produced for your important input, I would like to encourage us to step back and remember what this is about. To do that, I want to ask two questions: what are we hearing and what are we saying?

One of the learning points for me over the last seven months has been joining the NST's online engagement forums, where victims and survivors shape the agenda through questions and discussion. Keeping, of course, what has been said in strictest confidence, I nonetheless hope I might tell you something of what I have learned so far, and how that might help us to think about redress, and, in particular, about the need for restorative practice and action across the whole body of the Church. What I am hearing is that we need a whole Church approach to safeguarding, and therefore to redress, in relation to trauma. This includes being better at training, better at responding to disclosures, better at dealing humanely and swiftly with complaints, better at providing support options to victims and survivors, as well as paying more attention to our language and less to our reputation. It means apologising properly.

Our work around redress takes us in the right direction, but if we see it as only about money then we will miss the broader culture change that is needed, and if we see it only as money and someone else should pay, then we will miss the collective responsibility that is at its heart. If we are a body of Christ, and a Church of many bodies - parishes, dioceses, central services, Church Commissioners - but one body under God, then all parts need to commit to both the financial costs and the changes of behaviour that will bring about a safer and healthier culture. That is what I am hearing.

And what are we saying? We are saying sorry and following that apology with action. Making restitution has deep biblical roots. Think of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 and of the virtue of giving half our possessions to the poor, and, if we have cheated anybody out of anything, paying back four times that amount. Abuse is a whole Church salvation matter, and our actions now as a whole Church can speak of God's justice. They should speak in tangible and trauma-informed ways of support for victims and survivors. They should also speak of our commitment to culture change across the whole Church.

So, in redress, let us both listen and speak. Our actions need to say we have heard the pain and sorrow of those who are hurting, and that we are committed to acting in repentance and restitution. I urge us to move forward with the Redress Scheme and approve this First Consideration of the draft Redress Measure.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool): I warmly welcome the draft Measure which has been presented to us. Of course, we wish that it were not necessary to have a Redress Scheme at all, but it very much is, and so we need as good a one as possible, and it strikes me that this is such a Measure. I hope that we can all recognise the rightness of the concept of redress for instances of abuse which have taken place within Church of England contexts.

I am a strong supporter of Safeguarding Sunday, the day identified each autumn for churches to focus on safeguarding in their Sunday services, not because we do not think about it the rest of the year but because it rightly reminds us that safeguarding is national and it is local. It is big picture and it is small scale. It is everybody's business and it is everybody's responsibility.

It is from that foundational belief that I want to endorse and support the suggestions relating to financial contributions in section 12 of the paper. It seems to me that it is entirely appropriate that the local body involved accepts liability by making a contribution towards the redress payment which is agreed. I say this as the vicar of a local church with absolutely no money to spare, but in a situation where we were found to be liable, I believe it would be right for us to contribute, and indeed it is our responsibility to ensure that we are appropriately prepared and insured for such an eventuality.

The way the scheme has been set up ensures that the whole Church is able to offer support across the body, so there is a safety net for those contexts which are, for whatever reason, unable to contribute at all. The funding formula outlined in the paper seems to me to balance rightly the need for the recognition of institutional liability with a commitment that we should bear one another's burdens.

I thank Bishop Philip and all involved in preparing this Measure. I look forward to the project coming to fruition as soon as possible, and I urge Synod to give this Measure its fullest support.

Dr Nick Land (York): I apologise if this sounds a little bit technical, but I am very keen to bring this to ensure that this very important scheme is not derailed. I want to talk a little bit about paragraph 7 on the determination of application for redress. This involves the standard of proof by which we determine something has occurred, and someone is entitled to compensation.

As some of you will be aware, there are generally two standards of proof. One of them is in criminal cases, "beyond reasonable doubt" or 99% sure. And we do this because we believe it is better for 10 guilty people to go free than for one innocent person to be found guilty, although if you are the victim of one of the 10 guilty people who go free, you might not have quite the same perspective

What I understand is that we are going to use the civil standard of proof, which is the "balance of probabilities": it is more likely than not that this has occurred, so 51%. That maximises the opportunity for people to be receiving redress.

However, the technical issue I want to raise is that, actually, the civil standard of proof is more variable than that. In 2003, the House of Lords said the more serious an issue is the more onerous the standard of proof, and the more evidence you need. Subsequently, there have been a series of cases where the matter being determined by the civil courts

was a matter for which there would be significant consequences - a criminal matter - and, of course, in many cases the abuse of individuals would be a criminal matter. In those cases, the standard of proof in the civil courts is almost indistinguishable from that of the criminal courts.

Why does this matter? Because, if we are not careful, particularly in those cases where it has come first through the tribunal system that we are setting up, there is a risk that people will come forward and it will be clear they have been abused, and we might be able to find a clear measure they have been abused, but finding a standard of proof which then points the finger at an individual or a parish would then require a higher standard of proof than we currently would have. The risk there is that any appeal would then lead to that determination failing.

We might want to consider splitting this into two determinations: first, has this person been abused within a Church setting, yes or no (thereby they are entitled to redress); and, secondly, if that is the case, are we able to identify clearly with that higher standard of proof where that might be, which might then allow for the localisation of that provision of redress. I would like the Revision Committee to spend some time considering how we can ensure that that is resolved.

The Revd Canon David Bruce Bryant-Scott (Europe): I speak in favour of the motion. For the past five years, I have been the priest in the Anglican Church of St Thomas on the island of Crete in Greece, so *Kalimera*. It is a rough job, but somebody's got to do it! Before that, I spent 30 years in the Anglican Church of Canada where I was an archdeacon for nine of those years, dealing with a number of lawsuits, and also involved in redress regarding survivors of the Indian residential schools.

Imagine you are a member of a PCC or a trustee of an institution and that you have been sued over a case of sexual misconduct which dated back many years, perhaps long before you were an adult or were even a Christian, or had anything to do with that church. Now imagine that you are dealing with several of those lawsuits. It is a little overwhelming. Pause for a moment, and imagine that you have 1,600 of these lawsuits against you. This was the situation 20 years ago faced by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, as well as a majority of the dioceses, all of these cases arising out of abuse that took place in the residential schools. It was an existential threat to the corporate existence of the General Synod, and plans were being made in 2004 about how we would carry on being Church if the General Synod went bankrupt.

One diocese, the Diocese of Cariboo, in fact suspended operations as a legal body because it had run out of money after settling just two cases. Courts in that situation were ordering parishes in the Diocese of Cariboo to inventory all their assets, from the bank accounts and the trust funds, the silver chalices and the ornately carved pews, right down to the supplies in the Sunday School cupboard and the drawings that were on the walls done by the students. All of this, as I said, emerged out of the abuse and oppression endured by tens of thousands.

This could be our situation in the Church of England if we do not have a scheme such as the one that has been presented to us. We need the Redress Scheme for two reasons: first, to get control of the situation lest it becomes burdened by court-driven lawsuits (believe me, you do not want to go there); and secondly, and more importantly, we can act proactively to promptly address the ongoing pain and suffering of people who have been abused by the Church.

It has already been too long, and we should not delay any longer. We can work out the details as we go along. As Christians, we need to take responsibility to address these scandals and not get fixed on who is going to deal with this liability and that. Thank God for the Church Commissioners, otherwise we would really be hooped. If we do not, I can assure you that it will only compound the scandal, increase the trauma of the survivors, and it will hamper our evangelism and our ability to do outreach. We need to be survivor-oriented and compassionate, and we need to repent. The scheme is all this. It has been well thought out, it has been worked on, and we will improve it. I encourage you to approve it.

Mrs Caroline Herbert (Norwich): Thank you for calling me, Chair, and particularly thank you to all those who have worked on this scheme so far. I am glad that, by meeting in November, we have the opportunity to talk about it and move it forward perhaps quicker than if we had to wait till February. I would like to particularly welcome clause 8(1) that mentions both the possibility of a payment and possibly some other remedy. I think it is important to remember that we are not just talking about money here, and that redress may include more than that.

I would like to raise a specific query about the table in 12(3), particularly if the person who committed the abuse was a visitor to a Church school. I am not quite sure I understand the reasoning for the accountable body being the PCC for the parish in which the school is situated, rather than the school itself. If that could be explained to us in terms of the principle of finding the relevant accountable body. It seems the PCC can often be at arm's length, particularly if the Church school, as in our parish, is an academy and, therefore, we do not even have the incumbent as *ex officio* chair of governors.

Also, and hopefully this follows up from some of the points that Nick Land was making, I am concerned that clause 12(5) could be in danger of being unhelpfully restrictive, where it says, "It is not open to a person from whom a contribution is required to argue that some other person is vicariously liable to pay some or all of the contribution". I completely understand the explanation given in paragraph 60 of GS 2625X that this is to prevent a relevant accountable body seeking to avoid an obligation by shifting it on to others, but, as Nick Land said, you need to make sure that you have assigned the responsibility correctly and, if there has been a genuine error of misidentification, where a body can actually challenge that. There might be confusion over dates, names, changing parish boundaries. Perhaps this will be explained in the Rules as to where the engagement with the relevant accountable body is going to happen because, at the moment, it looks as

though they may not hear anything until the letter lands on the doorstep, and they will then be told that they cannot challenge because that would be wrong. As I say, I hope this will be explained, and if those points could be considered I would be grateful.

The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (ex officio): I should also like to thank the Redress Board team of officers and the Legal Office for all their work to bring the draft Measure to Synod today, together with the helpful explanatory material.

Synod, you will perhaps have noted a lot of references to detail being worked out in the Rules and the work of the Rule Committee of General Synod. Some of you may know that one of my functions as Dean & Auditor is to chair that Committee, and a few of you may know I am also, as it happens, a member of the Redress Board. I want to reiterate the thanks and admiration I expressed in York over the summer to the survivors who also sit on that Board for their gracious participation and hard work in helping to bring this draft Measure before you this morning.

Our conversations on the Board deal with the important principles which underpin the draft Measure: the architecture, as one of the support papers puts it. The work which the Rule Committee will do will be nuts and bolts, not the overall design, but the necessary detail, to ensure that the principles set out in the Measure are carried into effect in real life.

Thinking about Archbishop Stephen's eucharistic sermon this morning, we shall be the servants of the Measure, and of the scheme. This will be demanding. There are, as I have said, many references in the draft Measure to that detailed work. We will ensure that we hear survivor voices in that process as we work to give practical effect to the overriding statutory principle in the Measure of dignity, respect and compassion.

I would like to assure Synod, and all survivors, that whilst the devil is often said to inhabit detail, my prayer is that our work on the Rule Committee will instead be thoroughly inhabited by God: our loving Creator, our blessed Redeemer and our inspiring Spirit. Members of Synod, please will you pray for us as we embark on what will be complex but necessary work?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Chair, thank you for calling me, though you do not really get much of a choice when I stand up, so I will be brief.

Bishop Philip, thank you so much to you, and the group you are working with, for bringing this to us, and particular thanks to the survivors who are part of this, who are helping to shape this in so many ways.

I want to return us just briefly to Paul Benfield's opening speech in the debate, in which he made very clear that of course he supports the Redress Scheme but was urging us to vote against this. I want to just remind us that we are trying to do things a bit differently

here. Normally I would agree with Fr Paul that, of course, you have to have the policy first and then the legislation, but we are doing it differently this time because we want survivors to be involved at every stage of the process in shaping this legislation. Therefore, neither do we ask them to do it for us and then we will rubber stamp it, but nor are we trying to do it all ourselves and then simply pass it on. It is an iterative process and it is different, but I see no other way for such a challenge as this.

So Synod, please vote for this motion and, in so doing, recognise, and for me give thanks, that we are not just dealing with this question, but we have chosen, under Bishop Philip's leadership, to deal with it in a rather different way than is usually the case.

Dr Simon Eyre: (Chichester): I want to make it clear at the outset that I fully support the intentions of this proposed legislation, but I do have considerable concern at the impact this will have at the parish level. It will be PCCs who will bear the administrative burden of executing elements of the proposed legislation and, even if adequate insurance can mitigate the financial implications, the proposals raise some concerns.

Often the abuse will be historical, several years, often 20 or 30 years ago, and almost certainly there will be no members on that PCC who were members at the time the abuse occurred. I do wonder if it is really right that they should have that burden placed upon them.

Parishes involved have often been severely affected. In my own deanery of Eastbourne, I can think of at least two parishes where abuse occurred that have dwindled in size, in part due to the abuse that took place there, and those two parishes, because of that decline, have become combined benefices with a neighbouring parish.

Under this proposed legislation, it is my understanding that it will be the responsibility of a joint PCC to enact the legislation, and I do wonder again if that is right and proper.

Then there is the question of insurance, which raises for me at least three questions. Parishes where abuse has occurred may already have had a call on their public liability insurance to settle a civil claim. Will the insurers now support a further claim by the proposed scheme? Also, if a parish has adequate insurance to cover any payments under the Redress Scheme, will they be like those trapped in houses on a flood plain with spiralling insurance premiums as a result of the claims made? Thirdly, what about parishes who have changed their insurers in recent years and have perhaps inadvertently lost potential cover for historic abuse occurring while the previous policy was in place?

I think the wording in the Measure alludes to the difficulties: "Each accountable body must, insofar as it is reasonably practicable to do so, obtain on the open market insurance". What if a parish, because of its history, is unable to obtain insurance at an affordable cost?

Finally, I think there is a significant risk that, if PCCs are asked to act, some PPC members will walk away and resign. They are there, after all, on a voluntary basis, and they may not feel they want to deal with the stress that is involved.

The parish at its heart is the worshipping congregation, not its physical boundaries or structures. If the congregation had no involvement in the abuse, should they be drawn into the process simply because of the geographical location where the abuse was perpetrated?

In finishing, thanks are due to all those who drafted this legislation. It would have been a difficult and sensitive task, which has been undertaken with the utmost rigour and compassion, and I am grateful for that, but I would ask that the role of the parish in its execution be subject to critical review at this stage.

The Rt Worshipful Timothy Briden (ex officio): Timothy Briden, Vicar-General at Canterbury. I am, together with the Dean, a member of the Rule Committee, and I want to endorse and echo what the Dean has already said about the Rule Committee's work.

My reason for standing now is that, during my years in practice as a barrister, I used to make regular appearances before what was then the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. The procedures adopted by the Board bear a notable similarity to those which are proposed under the draft Measure.

From my past experience, I would like to draw attention to three matters which I think, at this stage, are worthy of emphasis. First of all, independence. However generous or benevolent the party funding a compensation scheme, be it the insurers or even the Church Commissioners, it will always be suspect because of its interest in minimising expenditure. The conflict of interest is obvious and blatant. It can only be overcome if the person or the panel assessing compensation is, and is perceived to be, wholly independent of the body making the compensation payment.

Secondly, transparency. The amount of compensation is not a figure which is simply being plucked out of the air. In order to be credible, an award has to be assessed in accordance with known and established principles, and I am sure that the Rule Committee will be looking at that. The effect is that an applicant may understand the underlying reasoning behind the redress payment, and have confidence that there is equality of treatment between that survivor and all the others who are making claims.

Thirdly, speed and efficiency. The process is not a contested legal case. Instead it is primarily an inquiry into the applicant's entitlement to redress. There is no opposing party to delay proceedings or run up additional legal costs. This should point to an agile system responsive to the needs of applicants. But a word of caution. That is only achievable if sufficient panel members and support staff are recruited so that backlogs do not build up.

And I urge Synod to support the motion now before it.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I want to begin by saying that I very much of course support the need for a scheme such as this, for which survivors have waited far too long, but, in so doing, I want to echo some of the concerns that Simon Eyre has expressed (probably much better than I shall), particularly in relation to contributions from parishes, and indeed from dioceses.

At the moment, it is not clear whether such contributions will be requested or required, and there is a big difference between those two things. I think it is easy to imagine situations in which a parish may indeed have a strong sense of its own culpability and may recognise that it is right and proper that it should contribute towards the redress. But we are told, and it is made clear, that the requirement for contributions is not intended to imply culpability or guilt. So we also have to think about those situations, some of which Simon Eyre outlined, where it is hard to establish any culpability, or it would be hard to do so, certainly on the part of the current people in the parish, because the fact is that the vast majority of parishes, and indeed dioceses, do not have a lot of spare cash. What money they have is needed either for present-day ministry, or, if they have reserves, they put those aside to care for a very old building which is expensive to maintain. Indeed, as we have already heard, it may not be possible for them to insure against liabilities of this type. They could be faced with big costs which have a real impact on the parish, when the anger of the survivors in general is more directed towards the national Church than to the local level, from what we have heard.

The Church Commissioners do have the money and have a lot of money which is not already earmarked for other purposes. I would ask those looking at this, please, to consider whether it would not be more appropriate for the Redress Scheme simply to be funded by the Church Commissioners.

The Chair: I would like to turn to Zoom now, and I call Clive Billenness.

Mr Clive Billenness (Diocese in Europe): Chair, I would be amazed if there was a single member of Synod who does not feel we must offer proper redress to the victims of the abuse scandals which have rocked our Church, and sadly continue to do so. I certainly feel that way. Redress payments must be made quickly and must be seen to be fair by everyone, both inside and outside the Church. But, as Paul Benfield has warned, this Measure is not ready to deliver this just yet, and for me it is like a cake that needs just a little more time in the oven before we start the detailed revision, to avoid having to do it twice.

The proposal is a lengthy document, and I cannot hope to cover the 10 major issues identified in the three minutes which I have been given. I spent over an hour with the project team, and I thank them for this, discussing it in detail, and another 90 minutes going through it with colleagues afterwards, and I cannot do that justice in three minutes, so here is a summary of why I think you should vote against it today but not in future.

I want you to imagine a three-legged stool. The first leg is the draft Measure itself. It contains proposals that parishes, and even schools, should be asked, or possibly compelled, to make redress payments, not because they are in any way to blame but to share repentance. And thank you, Dr Nick Land, for raising the issue of assigning liability. How you compel a parish to pay anything I am not sure, and implications for those parishes which might find they have inherited an historic obligation is worrying. “Ah, but don’t worry”, you are told, “you can take out insurance”. Simon Eyre has warned about the complexities there. New insurance will not cover you for historic cases which arose before it was put into place, and it will not insure you for some payment calculated by a Church of England panel, where there is no actual legal identified liability, and where the amount you are asked to pay relates to your ability to pay, and so will be influenced, inevitably, by, “Don’t worry, they’ve got insurance, so they can afford it”. Who would underwrite that risk?

None of this will work, and it will turn parishes, which are often themselves victims of the abuse, as Simon has mentioned, owing to the betrayal they have experienced, into possibly being seen as perpetrators. That alone should make you reject this Measure today. And that is one leg of the stool removed.

The second leg is the detailed rules needed to make this Measure function. Until we have seen these, we have no idea how the Measure will operate day to day, and we have heard concerns. We have been told, “Trust us, we will produce them later after you have passed this”. I think Synod should see this. It is the whole package which will ensure justice and proper redress for abuse victims. There goes the second leg.

The third leg is the review of the future of safeguarding being performed by Alexis Jay, which will report before the February 2024 Synod, and we already know is going to propose fundamental changes to safeguarding arrangements. I know that in my submissions to her, even before this Measure was published, I included detailed proposals about any future redress schemes, which, if she listens, will radically change how this Measure will operate. For one thing, it would entirely remove the Archbishops’ Council and its successor organisations from any involvement whatsoever in its administration and make it truly independent.

So, there goes your third leg and your stool is now a tea tray. Timothy Briden has referred to some of these issues. If there is a no-legged stool in November, why not bring it back to our November 2024 meeting? I am going to oppose the motion for now. Let us not rush it. Let us get it right.

Emily Hill (Hereford): First, I would like to thank those involved for their hard work in creating this scheme and recognising how invaluable this will be to victims and survivors of abuse. There are two things, however, I would like to address. The first one is more of a question. On page 10 of the draft scheme, section 20 addresses the position where if the applicant dies and there is no surviving spouse or partner, the claim can be continued by a child. I applaud this, because abuse does not just impact the victim or

survivor but also their family. However, this Measure excludes step-children but then goes on to provide for children dependent of the applicant.

The Church of England recently released its *Love Matters* report in which the first ambition is to value families in all their diversity, and as our Church allows the remarriage of divorcees, we must then recognise that there are blended families, some of which will have step-parents raising a step-child from a young age. With that being said, can you provide some clarity on the position of step-children in the Redress Scheme?

Secondly, I recognise the means test and the repayment scheme; however, either we will imply survivors' abuse is worth so little because the PCC simply cannot afford it, or PCCs will feel under pressure to pay the redress, potentially at the expense of mission or Parish Share within the maximum five-year repayment scheme.

I would also like to argue that where it was the diocese which was responsible for safeguarding training and DBS checks in parishes, and the dioceses who put forward someone for ordination and then installation, why is it not the responsibility of the diocese to pay the redress?

Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool): Thank you so much for the work on this important Measure. The thing I want to ask is whether paragraph 3 could be tighter? It is wonderful that we have a wide scope in who we want to be able to access this scheme, both locally within the shores of the UK as well as internationally, but I wonder if we can tighten it up to help TEIs and mission agencies, because we train and send Gospel workers both within the UK and also abroad, also Anglicans and non-Anglicans.

It might be obvious when a missionary goes abroad and is working under Church of England and Anglican orders, but it is also possible to know that there are those who plant and revitalise using free church orders and, evidently, one category is very closely connected to the Church of England and one is not closely connected. There is a gap in the middle, because there are those who plant independent churches, independent of any other church-planting organisation, but who may have been sent by a mission agency which is signed up to the PWM.

My question is: would they fall under the remit of this Redress Scheme? When it comes to TEIs, we send ordinands and students to do lots of different work during their studies. If they were to be placed in churches which were wholly independent of other planting networks, would they also be within the remit of this Redress Scheme, for example, if they went to an Anglican training college as an independent?

Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells): I represent the House of Laity on the Archbishops' Council and the Archbishops' Council on the Redress Scheme Board, which means I have been to a lot of meetings about this scheme, and a lot of other meetings too. I would like to think that I am representing the voice of concerned parishes as a lay person. I have a

PCC meeting on Wednesday night, and you can imagine how excited I am to go to that, given the events that are ahead of us.

Let me assure Synod that we are determined to make this scheme work, first and foremost, for survivors of abuse but also for everyone in the Church of England. This is something in which we all have to play our part and take responsibility, which is not the same as something being your fault. As holders of all kinds of offices within the Church of England, we need to take responsibility for providing a really good Redress Scheme, and this Measure is the start. We need to get it right, and, therefore, we should welcome all kinds of critiques and criticisms and “what abouts?”, and we have just begun that today.

I would encourage you to continue to engage beyond today, whether or not you are called to speak. If you Google the Church of England address, there is an email address there via which you can put your concerns and thoughts, and perhaps you could even consult people in your PCCs, and wider, particularly those with expertise, so that we can have a scheme that is as robust and just for everyone as possible, and that this would be for the glory of the font and source of all justice, the Lord Jesus Christ. I really hope that you will support this motion and this Measure.

The Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford): I begin by saying that I was part of the finance focus group which worked on some aspects of the Redress Scheme, feeding into the main project group. I also wish very clearly to frame the observations I am about to make and the questions I shall ask the Project Board and Revision and Rule Committees to make in the context of being utterly and wholeheartedly committed to an effective, transparent and just Redress Scheme for our survivors.

I say “our” because this is our collective story. We do not sit separately from victims and survivors as if we were somehow remote from their suffering; not part of the story and not part of the solution. We are. This is not a lesson in the uniqueness of each victim or survivor’s own story. It is to acknowledge that this failure is our collective failure and that this redress must be our collective redress.

In that context, I offer the following observations and questions to the project group and the Revision and Rule Committees. Please could the Rules for assigning responsibility and the amounts of financial redress which an accountable body would be responsible for paying be published at the earliest opportunity, while there is a chance for consultation? This would go a long way to settling fears that the good of redress could inadvertently lead to a PCC being unable to fund other aspects of its work.

Insurance - what would be the situation if a claim were to be made and upheld where the PCC was the accountable body, but it was at a time in the past when insurance was not generally available or taken up? Would the PCC then be responsible for paying the full amount of financial redress awarded because they had not taken out insurance (which was not available)?

If the Redress Scheme means that new disclosures of abuse come forward, how will the determinations under the Redress Scheme relate to criminal proceedings and proceedings under either the existing Clergy Discipline Measure or the forthcoming Clergy Conduct Measure?

I offer these questions in order to make the legislation as good as it can be. I shall be voting in support of the motion and urge others to do so too.

The Ven. Dr Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells): I had a number of things I was going to say but I am going to jettison them because Simon Eyre, Prudence Dailey and Fiona Gibson have just made some of them. It relates very much to how this will impact on the ground.

I understand that a PCC is a body corporate, and, therefore, the individuals themselves are not, in any sense, held accountable or liable individually. However, both when I was chair of a PCC as incumbent and now as archdeacon, I have seen a number of PCCs in my patch where members of those PCCs are themselves survivors of abuse, or who are related to those who have committed abuse or whose relatives are survivors of abuse themselves. Therefore, I just want to urge caution and ask those who are working on this just to think it through. It seems to me that body corporates work when they are big enough that people do not feel it personally, but a PCC often is small enough that people feel it very personally. I want to urge caution as to the pastoral implications that may come from the fact, however we understand all the legal language, that it will be felt personally by a PCC, and by each member of it. I just want to urge some caution.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): “I would like to support this motion but ...” I do not know about other members of Synod, but I am tired of the “but”. I am tired of us putting a plan forward to help people who have been wounded by our Church and then adding a but. It is blame-shifting again and again and again. When will it stop? The prophet Daniel in exile confessed his sins although they were the sins of his people. Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended the cross not for His sins but for other people’s sins. This is not about what we might have done or where the blame lies. All of us have sinned in this case, and we need to get on with this, stop reopening wounds and begin to be a healing humble Church.

Madam Chair, I ask that you might exercise your privilege in calling for a vote of the whole Synod when we come to a vote on the motion.

The Chair: Thank you.

The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford): I want to speak wholeheartedly in favour of getting this process further along. It has been delayed too long. But I want to reflect on three things about it, one of which is from my own experience of leading a parish in which abuse has happened. People end up feeling betrayed and divided. Even if the abuse is recent, quite often some people do not believe it. Asking a divided PCC to make a contribution is not going to help anyone. So, I am really hoping that there will be work

done on how much of this risk is insurable and that there will be some certainty about that.

The incumbent is not appointed by the PCC. Why the person who appoints is not the accountable body for some of these offices is unclear to me, and why it is the PCC which is the accountable body when they are not the employer or manager or supervisor. Anyway, that is detail.

I am also concerned about independence. Our governance review is looking at the structures of the bodies we already have. If we are setting up new ones, then they ought to come within that consideration of where they best sit, and I would want this to be visibly independent.

Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford): I have a technical point and one small response to make. This is about clause 3(3), the section talking about the conditions before a person can claim redress. It is the condition "... there is a close connection between activities authorised for performing that role and carrying out the abuse", so there is a connection between the abuser and the Church activity, effectively.

I quite understand the difficulties there are, and there has been a lot of good work put into the Committee, between making sure we are not giving redress for something that is nothing to do with the Church and cases where it is clearly to do with the Church. It is that sort of fuzzy area in between, for example, somebody who was, say, the vicar and the scout master and the abuse took place on a church parade at the church, or somebody who is a long standing vicar in a small town, who is well-known, well respected and trusted because of that, but the abuse does not take place in church.

I do not have any easy answers, but I would just ask you to look again at whether "close connection" might be just too narrow, to make sure we get people who were abused because the perpetrator has a position in Church even though it is not strictly a Church activity. I do not have an easy answer, but perhaps if you look at the words "close connection" and see what else can be done so we are catching the people we ought to catch while excluding people where the abuse was not part of Church activities, or Church abuse at all.

I also want to take the opportunity to respond to Dr Land who was talking about the burden of proof earlier. In a former role I was legal adviser to the former Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, dealing with, among other things, complaints about MPs and sexual misconduct. The burden of proof was the balance probabilities. That is the normal one for redress schemes (this is not a trial), so I would urge the team to stick to balance of probabilities, as I think that is the correct one in this case.

Mrs Dawn Brathwaite (Birmingham): I am pleased to see the progress that has been made resulting in this draft Measure before General Synod. I wanted to offer some comments or reflections on this Measure because we know (and there are many other

examples of schemes being put in place) that a scheme that is not properly resourced from an operational point of view, or that is not robustly stress-tested before it goes live, will have too many teething problems, will lead to frustrations and, inevitably, accusations of bad faith and/or incompetence, at a time when the Church is trying to make amends.

Whilst I applaud and support this motion for a draft Measure, I also offer the following observations. There appear to be no time limits for appeals. It would be useful to know the thinking behind this, as leaving it open-ended can make it more difficult to plan for possible appeals in a timely manner. I do not think the time limits around appeals should be left to the Rules. I think they should be in this particular draft Measure. It is also stated that an appeal is limited to a review. Does that mean that no new information can be introduced at the appeal stage, and is this something that will be picked up in the Rules?

On the question of who can bring a claim or continue a claim after the death of an individual who meets the criteria for redress, can you clarify if this sits outside of the rules of intestacy? For example, can an executor or the holder of letters of administration pursue a claim on behalf of an estate?

I know this is potentially complex, but I can foresee disputes as to which child or children - and we have heard reference to step-children - can bring claims. I assume that section 8(7) is simply saying that we will signpost individuals to where they can get financial advice and that we will not be going on to give financial advice to recipients of compensation.

My final point, and it goes back to where I started and it is a general one, is a plea to ensure that the operational side is adequately resourced, failing which all the good work and intentions will unravel, and unravel rather quickly.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): Many of you may not know that the Redress Scheme and its current interim support scheme arose out of a grass-roots rebellion during the last quinquennium by members prepared to challenge the Church. As a result, Bishop Jonathan Gibbs and I were able to consult and bring a proposal for this initiative, and I was happy to join him, and I seconded it. This is very much our baby, and our motion was passed unanimously. This scheme needs a lot of work and it is not yet good enough, but I am committed to its perfection and success.

The survivor community does not speak with one voice on these matters so if you support the paper, you have survivor support; if you oppose it, you have survivor support. I should report that to you.

I wrote to a number of people I know to ask them what position I should take, and I am afraid I got a variety of responses. Some of them said, for example, that they feel the Redress Scheme is not fit for purpose and it should have been dumped many months ago. They refer to Alexis Jay's proposals and think it will be sensible to merge the administration of the Redress Scheme into the new safeguarding structure which is then

recommended. Some others said, well, please fight for it to happen soon and to happen on terms that recognise the enormity of damage and impact through life sustained by many survivors, please ask for it to happen transparently. I hope we all have that one on board.

Several believe that the present scheme is not fit for purpose and they would accept a modicum of delay. They want us to consult and get it right. That might feed into, and I am not taking a position on this, Paul Benfield and Prudence Dailey's concerns as expressed. What one said was, "I agree that time needs to take to get things like redress right. However, they need to check with survivors when crafting the scheme. We need to be asked what will work for us. We don't want to be treated like guinea pigs again".

I specifically put the Save the Parish reservations to them, and one came back and said, "Save the Parish is an excellent organisation, they are on our side. My feeling is that the C of E specialises in setting something up but it is a rush job because it's all part of a continuum of always dealing with the issues and never actually reaching a conclusion. This situation is more of the same".

The final one I will read to you, which did rather amuse me because of the way it was put, "Bishop Mountbatten(*sic*) wanted it to be the gold standard of redress schemes. It is clear having read this draft that it is actually fools' gold".

So, you are getting a variety of responses out of the people I am consulting with. There is a problem because who to consult with in the survivor community is very difficult. There are no elections; there are many opinions. I offer them to you. I am going to take an abstention position because of my relationship with many of them, but I hope, having heard what they have had to say about it, that that has been of some help to you.

Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle): I wish to speak in favour of the motion. First of all, I would like to say that I very much concur with the Dean of the Arches on the requirement that the Rule Committee really hears the voices of survivors in the process. For me, as a member of the Rule Committee, that really is absolutely important if we are going to follow in the spirit of this, and particularly that first clause of the Measure.

I have heard a lot of disquiet about us moving to finally approve the Measure when not necessarily having all the details available. I think one of the important things is that, once the Measure is enacted, it cannot really start properly in operation until we actually have the Rules agreed by this Synod because it is the Rules that will actually kick off the process. I think Synod, in this case, will actually have full sight of the way the scheme will operate in detail before it can possibly start, so I think, particularly because of the balance in this Measure between the work of the primary legislation and the secondary legislation, we actually have some real safeguards there, and I think the Rule Committee will be working to make sure we overcome some of the objections that we have heard.

Mrs Penny Allen (Lichfield): I just wanted to make a very brief reference to children. Members of Synod will know that there are some children with no relatives and children in care who are often represented in civil courts by a guardian *ad litem*. This is a person who looks after their legal interests. Because we have children arriving in this country from abroad who may become abused in our systems, because we have children who have no parents, and have no relatives to conduct proceedings on their behalf, I think we have to be very careful to safeguard their position. The guardian *ad litem* is a person who safeguards and helps another person in private and in court proceedings.

I had a friend who worked for many years in this profession, and she dealt with a wide range of children in care who had no responsible adult to look after them. And children in care, as we all know, are all vulnerable children. They are easily abused in systems, and I do think we have to have great care for them in this.

I am going to vote wholeheartedly for this. We are long overdue for these proceedings. I absolutely agree with Andrew: we cannot excuse ourselves. Every one of the people here has deep sympathy for all victims.

Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford): I welcome this draft Measure and the assurances that it has been and will be developed in collaboration with victims and survivors. Thank you, Bishop Philip, for driving this forward. This is important for the whole Church, and we all want to get it right. It is good that we talk of repentance and redress. Thank you, Andrew Dotchin, for your comment in this respect.

Mine is a brief comment about independence. We have talked a lot about independence in the handling and oversight of our responsibilities relating to safeguarding, and we need to see them here too. Timothy Briden helpfully highlighted this in his speech, as did Clive Billenness.

In the draft Measure, clause 2, subsections 2 and 3, it states that the Archbishops' Council may delegate its functions as a redress body and/or its functions of determining applications for or award of redress. Would it not be appropriate to insist that those functions must be delegated to an appropriate body (or person) who would fulfil these functions independently? This would help to ensure that we are, and are seen to be, building real independence into the process.

The Chair: Thank you. I would like to call for a motion for closure, test the mind of Synod.

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

The Chair: Can I ask Bishop Philip to come and respond to the debate? You have five minutes.

The Bishop of Winchester (The Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen): Thank you, Chair, very much. I doubt I will need five minutes but I may be wrong. Thank you, Synod, for some

very, very helpful contributions indeed. This was exactly what we hoped for, and exactly what we wanted. I will return to this later, but this is a matter of co-creation. You have been immensely helpful in the comments that you have made.

I do want particularly to thank Bruce Bryant-Scott, and just to say it is really helpful to hear experiences from elsewhere in the world and to assure Synod that we have done an awful lot of benchmarking with other schemes globally.

There is a lot of learning out there. We are not seeking to reinvent the wheel. We do need something that is bespoke for us, but there is learning to be gleaned from elsewhere and we have done that. I am not going to address a number of the really important technical points that have been made around issues like the civil standard of proof, etc. That is precisely what we want to hear, what we need to go away and work on. I do want to address, I suppose, two issues.

I want to talk a little bit more about the issue of the funding formula and about accountability and more generally. I think it is really important to say, and the draft Measure addresses this, that we are at no point talking about personal liability. We are talking about liability that may rest with corporate bodies but that does not rest on individual trustees or employees, or trustees of bodies that may help, liable for redress. It is really important, I think, to stress that. It is also really important to say that, whilst, of course, we do talk about money, redress, as I think Caroline Herbert said, is about much more than money. An apology may be worth its weight in gold compared with the money that may be available.

I do want to stress, because this came up, that we have and continue to have extended conversations with insurers. They have been part and parcel of our work for some time now. I do want to stress really strongly, as I said at the beginning, this is not about creating liability but managing it and sharing it together, recognising that safeguarding is everyone's business, recognising that we cannot outsource our responsibilities that properly rest with local bodies to other bodies.

We heard some language today about culpability and about guilt. That is not the language that we have used. James Cary's language was very helpful: we can be responsible for something without it being our fault. That is really important to recognise. Vicarious liability is the technical term. It is a concept well understood in law, indeed pretty much the entire insurance industry rests upon it, and so we are not making things up as we go along. We are working on clearly established precedent in all of this.

I also want to say that I think what we are proposing in terms of the funding formula and the allocation of liability actually reflects very well on our Anglican ecclesiology. It reflects the dispersed nature of the Church but the fact that, at the same time, we belong together. We must take responsibility where that responsibility lies, but this proposal allows us also to share that responsibility with one another. I want, finally, to address the argument that we should delay.

I fully accept there is a lot of work to do. I said at the beginning that we were not bringing something to you that was fully or finally formed. We want you to be co-creators with us in this. We will be transparent. We will bring a GS Misc paper to you in February 2024 and we will make the levels of financial awards that we are proposing clear at that point. But I do want today to urge Synod not to step out of the process but to keep moving forward, taking on board the requirement for scrutiny, the requirement for revision and the requirement for due diligence in every way.

As Martin says, there are multiple views amongst survivors, but I do want to stress that this scheme has genuinely been co-created by survivors who sit on the working group. It is being co-created. Those conversations which are not always easy continue, but we are deeply committed to that process. I do want to say that I believe rejecting this motion today would be to send a catastrophic message to survivors and to the wider Church. Andrew Dotchin said, "No more 'yes, but...'", let's just say "yes" and let's do that now.

The Chair: I am minded to take a counted vote of the whole Synod.

The motion was put and carried, 309 voting in favour, 21 against, with 13 recorded abstentions.

The Chair: This item is carried. We now move to the next item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Dover (The Right Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin)* took the Chair at 11.44 am

ITEM 6 QUESTIONS

The Chair: Members, we come now again to questions. We have approximately 122 questions to work with and I want to thank you for the self-restraint that you exercised yesterday to enable us to get through so many of the questions. I am going to hope that we will indulge each other again today to make sure we move as swiftly as possible through the questions.

Just reminding you that the same notes that were shared with you yesterday still stand. When we come to ask questions, please make sure that you get to your questions as quickly as possible and ensure that there are no arguments or imputation in your questions, and that you are not asking for hypothetical opinions or solutions.

Finally, I would just say that, again, I will be looking across the Synod for members asking supplementary questions, so I am not just responding to the first person who jumps up for a supplementary. Of course, priority is given to the person who has asked the question. I hope that is quite clear. We come now to questions.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

104. *The Revd Amatu Christian-Iwuagwu (London)* asked the Church Commissioners: How many full-time stipendiary posts for clergy or parish evangelists could be funded over a five-year horizon by the £30 million currently allocated for “net zero”?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) answered as Third Church Estates Commissioner: A total of £190 million has been specifically allocated to enable the Church to respond to the challenges of net zero, while £1.3 billion has been allocated over nine years for strategic national investment to support local communities by investing in local ministry.

Depending on the level of inflation and other benefits, it can be estimated that, over five years from 2024, £30 million would provide for between 80 and 85 full-time stipendiary clergy posts across the Church. This answer is based on the typical cost of full-time stipendiary clergy posts, drawing on material from the most recent Central Stipends Authority report (GS Misc 1330) on average stipend levels, housing provision, help with day-to-day costs and other benefits such as pension provision and professional and personal development. The cost of housing in particular varies considerably across the country.

The Net Zero Carbon programme is well-underway in dioceses and parishes, building on and supporting the implementation of the *Routemap to Net Zero* (GS 2258) that was endorsed by Synod in July 2022. The Archbishops’ Council and Church Commissioners have approved the broad allocations for the £30 million funding available for Net Zero Carbon activity in this triennium (2023-2025) and various projects to ensure this funding is well-deployed are underway.

Care for God’s creation is a core part of our Christian mission (Fifth Mark of Mission: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth) and it is important that the Church can play a leading role in the response to climate change and biodiversity loss.

The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester): How will funding for net zero carbon work contribute to churches being warm, welcoming and viable spaces, as well as a missional sign of hope to young people that we are listening to their concerns about the consequences of global warming?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield: I can tell a wonderful, very quick story from the parish of Embsay in the Diocese of Leeds, a rural parish which has taken the initiative to install nine different sorts of heating on the “heat the person not the building” principle, to invite their colleagues from the deanery to come and share with them the experience of what

works, and many hundreds of people have now been to that church for that practical illustration of how we can respond to the opportunity to make our places of worship literally warm and welcoming rather than just metaphorically.

I think there is also a really important point here about thought leadership. Here, we have an opportunity as the Church of England to be in thought leadership in our local communities, showing them that we understand that care for creation is at the heart of the Gospel that we proclaim. We have had the testimony of many local churches to the Carbon Net Zero Programme Board that that opportunity for thought leadership in their local place has been a really significant way of powering their mission, especially with young people.

105. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Church Commissioners: In July 2022, I asked the Church Commissioners a question regarding the cost of bishops (Q226).

The answer (unlike in 2021 or 2015 when this question was previously asked) was “placed on the ‘noticeboard’” and not made available to the press or public. This information was only provided due to a question being tabled.

This is a despite the commitment outlined below for an statement to be provided to Synod and published annually.

This was promised at the July 2021 group of sessions when I posed the following supplementary question:

“To help General Synod members understand and scrutinise the cost of bishops, will the Commissioners publish a breakdown of all costs of bishops for the last quinquennium by year and annually going forward, along with a data trend analysis, so we can fully understand the cost, or increasing cost of bishops?”

The Church Commissioners response committed them to publish the following information along with a data trend analysis annually:

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

Will the Church Commissioners therefore as previously agreed:

- publish an annual statement of the cost of bishops for the public to see;

- tell General Synod (and the nation) how much the cost of bishops has increased since 2015;
- and provide a data trend analysis and details of what the Church Commissioners are doing to bring down the cost of bishops while the rest of the Church is seeing rationalisation of their budget expenditure?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) answered as Third Church Estates Commissioner: We reconfirm our intention to publish the costs of bishops each year, likely in the summer, and apologise for not doing so in 2022. As in July 2023, the requested information is posted in the annex to the Questions Notice Paper along with all other “noticeboard” items (this is a public document). The Commissioners have a legal duty to pay bishops’ housing, office and working costs, and we seek good value for the Church’s money.

The table demonstrates that the increase in bishops’ costs over the period in question (2015-2022) is an average of 2.5% per annum, which is in fact lower than the rate of inflation over that time. Adjusted for inflation, the 2022 costs are 7% lower than the 2015 equivalent.

For the 2023-2025 triennium budget, bishops worked with the Commissioners’ staff to carry out a zero-based budget exercise, with the intention of seeking to ensure that the ministry of our bishops is appropriately supported, whilst also looking to offset cost increases due to the recent higher inflation and increases in the cost of living.

106. *The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox)* asked the Church Commissioners: To what extent have the Commissioners been able to take account of the great disparities in historic assets held by our cathedrals (as illustrated in the attached table, with covering note [see appendix to the Notice Paper]) as well as the great disparities in assets held by dioceses, as it considers how to resource the ministry of the Church of England fairly, nationwide?

107. *The Very Revd Chris Dalliston (Deans)* asked the Church Commissioners: What use will be made of the published table of Cathedral Assets in supporting our cathedrals in the challenges they face to be financially sustainable into the future?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) answered as Third Church Estates Commissioner: With the Chair’s permission I will answer the questions from Bishop Pete and Dean Chris together. The figures referred to were not published by the Church Commissioners, but we have noted them. The figures are from 2020, and do not appear to give an overall indication of the financial strength of our cathedrals, for example many of the indicated assets are tied to historic buildings that require additional money to maintain.

The purpose of transferring a significant proportion of assets held by cathedrals and bishops to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the mid-nineteenth century was to create

a national endowment which would continue to support those ministries and make “additional provision . . . for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required”.

The Commissioners provide funding for a dean and two residentiary canons at almost all mainland cathedrals; selective grant support towards the cost of lay staff and any additional stipendiary clergy; and grants for specific projects to help Chapters meet the challenges they face to be financially sustainable into the future. The main measure to determine selective grants is average unrestricted incomes of cathedrals. The Bishops & Cathedrals Committee is working with cathedrals to enable long term planning on sustainability, as well as short-term grants for operational support.

In advance of work beginning on spending plans for the next triennium (2026-28), we will consider the options for how best to direct grants to support cathedrals’ ministry. This could include how best to take the level of historic assets into account.

The Archbishops’ Council is working with dioceses on a Diocesan Finance Review, one aspect of which is to improve the understanding of diocesan assets and how they are currently used to support mission and ministry across the country. This information will feed into the planned review of Lowest Income Communities Funding and diocesan apportionment.

108. *Mr Robert Perry (Truro)* asked the Church Commissioners: In a circumstance where several parishes are being amalgamated into one much larger parish, and where one of the parishes has a much larger electoral roll than the others, what can be done to ensure that each of the former parishes will have at least one representative on the Parochial Church Council of the newly created parish, at least in its early years?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) answered as Third Church Estates Commissioner: Mr Perry is describing an example of pastoral re-organisation which is governed by the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and, yes, it is possible to ensure that the new PCC has representation from each of the former parishes. This can be achieved in two ways; either by including a clause in the legal instrument (technically a Pastoral Scheme) to that effect, or by the bishop making provision through another legal instrument which would be managed through the diocesan registrar. Those arrangements can last for five years, and if people wish them to continue, a new scheme has to be completed under the Church Representation Rules to make the arrangement permanent.

If any Member needs any further advice, please contact the Pastoral department – peter.wagon@churchofengland.org

109. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Church Commissioners: Have the Church Commissioners considered whether the current arrangement whereby the incumbent of the parish where a church building is being disposed of can veto a request

by a Christian body that is not part of the Church of England to take on the building can be justified in the light of: i) the Church of England claiming to be committed to ecumenism; and ii) in today's climate of recognising members of other churches belonging to organisations such as Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance as fellow Christians?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (ex officio) answered as Third Church Estates Commissioner: Assuming this question has in view the Commissioners' role in the disposal of a church building which is consecrated, their role is subject to the requirements of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 ("the MPM"). Under the MPM, the Commissioners consider such proposals once there has been a declaration of closure for regular public worship and the church building has been vested in the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The MPM does not give a right of veto to the incumbent of the parish where the church building is situated. Disposals under the MPM are subject to the overriding requirement that relevant parties must act in furtherance of the mission of the Church of England. The Commissioners' Code of Practice recognises that use for worship by other Christian groups is usually the best alternative use, and so disposals are often made to other Churches.

110. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: In his answer to question 218 in July 2023, the First Estates Commissioner confirmed that the Church Commissioners have approximately 4% of their fund invested directly in Chinese companies, with 39% in North America and 43% in Europe/UK. Please would you provide a list, country by country, in which the remaining 14% of the fund is invested?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Church Commissioners measure geographical exposure on a regional basis in line with the investment industry. We do not have the split between individual countries for every part of the portfolio. This was factored into the answer to Q218 in July 2023. In the Church Commissioners' 2022 Stewardship Report, we provide a geographical breakdown of our portfolio. While locations are based on company headquarters, many companies have global activities and supply chains, which is not visible in the geographical split.

Based on the portfolio value as of December 2022, of the remaining 14% mentioned in the question, approximately 1% of the fund is allocated to companies in Japan and India, respectively. Other larger portions are in South Korea, South Africa, Brazil and Australia. In addition to these investments, we also hold a significant amount of cash (~3%) to be able to meet our distribution commitments to the Church of England.

111. *Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given that China has been accused of genocide against the Uyghurs by two US Secretaries of State (Mike Pompeo and Anthony Blinken), do the Church Commissioners consider that continued direct investment in that country is morally justifiable?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: As with all our investments, we screen investee businesses for any activities which would be a breach of our ethical policies and exclude those companies. We also screen those investments for controversies relating to egregious violations of international norms, which may result in additional exclusions.

We are cognisant of the risks around investing in China, including ethical concerns. We do not invest in Chinese Government bonds.

Mr Andrew Gray: Given that investments create wealth and wealth is taxable, would the First Estates Commissioner explain why the Church Commissioners think that it is morally unacceptable to buy Chinese Government bonds but is morally acceptable to continue investing in China, knowing that China is committing genocide against the Uyghurs?

Mr Alan Smith: Thank you, Andrew, for that question, because it brings in a lot of dimensions. That actually brings out how disciplined we are in our approach to investing and our ethical processes. Through our Controversies Policy, at a very granular level we screen all of the companies that we invest across in all jurisdictions, in particular China. If you look at the rating within our portfolio, which is 4% for China, of companies domiciled in China, that is significantly below the contribution of the Chinese economy to the global economy. That shows the discipline in which we are being very focused on China.

Our exclusion from Chinese Government debt again shows that, at a sovereign level, we are not able to get that level of granularity and so that is why we exclude it. You have just actually given a very powerful example of how we are very careful around that in terms of making sure that we are very conscientious, whether it is China, whether it is any particular jurisdiction within which we operate, that particular entity in which we invest may have controversy. That is the way that we look at it.

112. *Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Church Commissioners: Noting with thanks the reply to my question at the July sessions about engagement with Amazon (one of the Commissioners' top 20 equity holdings) relating to corporate taxation policy and other matters: what progress has been made through this engagement; and have such matters as working conditions and treatment of employees been raised?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Church Commissioners are continuing to engage with Amazon on the issue of Artificial Intelligence Ethics through the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) collaboration. The WBA publishes an assessment of leading tech-companies and their contribution to digital inclusion, which is supported by an investor collaboration seeking to improve company practices.

Working conditions and employee treatment are not part of our current engagement, but we follow other investor engagements concerning workers' rights. For example, CCLA

has been engaging with Amazon and co-filed a shareholder resolution (to commission an independent, third-party assessment of Amazon's adherence to its stated commitment to workers' freedom of association and collective bargaining rights) in 2023. The proposal achieved just over 34% of the shareholder vote – a significant level of support in the context of shareholder resolutions - and CCLA will continue to engage with the company on workers' rights.

We are not currently engaging with Amazon on tax; this was part of an earlier collaborative engagement which has since closed.

113. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury)* asked the Church Commissioners: What proportion of the funds held by the Church Commissioners derives from the parochial endowments, which were transferred to the ownership of the Church Commissioners by virtue of the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976? In other words, what were the funds worth before said transfer took place, and what were they worth immediately thereafter?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 had two major financial effects.

The main change concerned the ownership and management of glebe assets, which was transferred from incumbents to Diocesan Boards of Finance (not the Church Commissioners).

Secondly, benefice endowments which had previously been held by the Church Commissioners on trust for specific benefices (usually for stipends' augmentation) were pooled and transferred to the general fund. The value of the assets under the Commissioners' stewardship on behalf of the Church was unchanged.

Following on from this second element, the Commissioners became liable to pay fixed grants of up to £1,000 p.a. (around one-third of stipends at the time) as part of incumbents' stipends. These totalled £5 million p.a. and were largely abolished by Measure in 2006, enabling the Commissioners to increase their targeted grant support for parish mission and ministry.

The changes brought about by the 1976 Measure were described in the Commissioners' 1976/77 annual report and accounts as "an important further stage in the century long process by which historic endowments of the Church of England will be shared more fairly for the benefit of the Church's ministry".

Mr Jonathan Baird: As per the question, please would it be possible to provide a further written answer as to the relative historical size of parochial or benefice endowments?

Mr Alan Smith: Yes, Jonathan, I am very happy to get the team to pull out that analysis for you. I think one important thing, if we can look at the question that you have asked, is that focus on the traditional endowment, and that change in 1976 that you are talking

about was one which was trying to get a more equitable distribution of support across the Church. But we will get that analysis provided for you, and provide it for you in writing.

The Revd Marcus Walker (London): I was wondering whether, Church Commissioner, your team would be able to do the analysis as to how much returning to the old scheme of providing approximately a third of the stipend of the clergy would now provide for the clergy, how much it would cost for the Church Commissioners to do this and what the mechanism for bringing this about might be?

Mr Alan Smith: I think as you know from more widely obviously the Church Commissioners invest and then collaboratively with the Emerging Church Steering Group which pulls together and looks at the level of distributions. Carl is working and going back to the kind of getting a granular analysis of the Church's real finances, gathering that across the dioceses, so that we have a very clear and consistent analysis. Coming out of that, Carl and myself and the entire bodies, Archbishops' Council and ourselves, are looking to have a grown-up discussion around how we make the financial processes most efficient. We are very happy for you to come and have that conversation with Carl and myself.

114. *The Revd Barry Hill (Leicester)* asked the Church Commissioners: As the Church Commissioners have significantly increased their mission investment in the local church, for which we give thanks, we note that, in God's grace, the Commissioners' total asset base has further significantly increased (in the past year alone by more than the entire stipend bill for the Church of England). Whilst these investments are making a significant missional impact in our communities, their outcomes and the Commissioners' principle of "intergenerational equity" are now dangerously at risk because of the financial context within many parishes and dioceses. Would the Church Commissioners be open, therefore, to conversations with the Archbishop's Council and dioceses about introducing legislation to additionally take on post-1997 clergy pension contributions, if the current analysis the Archbishops' Council has recently commissioned deems such an intervention would be helpful?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: In the current triennium (2023-2025), the Commissioners will make distributions of over £1.2 billion, about 30% higher than the previous triennium. This is enabled by strong investment returns in past years. However, continued strong investment returns cannot be presumed – evident in the more challenging investment markets over the past couple of years. In particular, an element of the returns achieved in recent years has been driven by the abnormally low level of interest rates, and that we have in effect "borrowed from the future". As interest rates return to historical normal levels, it requires that we are prudent and disciplined about distribution levels and commitments in ensuring that we support a sustainable and flourishing Church.

The annual review of the Church's endowment, which we manage, carried out earlier this year, confirmed that the increased level of distributions remains affordable. However, the

fund achieved a total return of 5% in 2022 - whilst this was a good performance given the challenging market conditions, it was below our target return, as well as the long-term figure used by the actuaries in their work to inform the Commissioners' decisions on overall distribution levels.

Although investment performance is only one factor in such assessments, it would be unwise to assume that the fund will have capacity to increase planned distributions following the next major assessment of the fund's capacity for distributions, which will be carried out in the first half of 2025.

The Archbishops' Council has not commissioned any analysis on clergy pensions recently. Were it to be proposed, any discussion or suggestion about the possibility of the Commissioners taking on post-1997 clergy pensions contributions would need to involve agreement on what distributions would be cut to provide the necessary funding.

The Revd Barry Hill: Thank you to the First Estates Commissioner for his answer, for the initial conversation yesterday and for the fruitful stewardship of these shared assets. Given in a relatively poor year the Church Commissioners' assets increased by three times more than the entire stipend bill of the Church of England, the question I get asked by many struggling parishes and dioceses is how much do the Commissioners consider is enough?

Mr Alan Smith: Actually, Barry, I want to thank you for that question. When we spoke in the corridor yesterday, I really welcomed that, because it is a very important question. It goes to the heart of how we collectively as a Church share our resources, and how we as the Church Commissioners share the money on behalf of the Church. Enough is actually the amount which allows us, as the Church Commissioners, to maximise the distributions every year whilst still making sure that we are very cognisant of intergenerational equity.

That is in our mandate. That is what we are committed to do because it is a really important thing. The Church Commissioners seek to distribute the maximum amount, and that is very important because the number of people who kind of think that £10.3 billion is in the bank account that you can go and draw down: no, that money has to last until the day before Jesus comes back, quite genuinely in support of the mission of the Church, which may be before I end this speech or it may be a very, very long time. We quite genuinely seek to do that. We have a financial measure which is CPIH + 4%. We also, again at the influence and the encouragement of the two Archbishops in last year's process, brought in a set of qualitative principles. It is not just an actuarial determination. I would be very happy to share with you those principles.

If you look at where we are, in terms of this triennium, we have increased the distribution by 30%, knowing that we are sailing into a storm, knowing that in the next three years, the next five years, and potentially next decade, the returns are going to be lower, but yet we have increased that distribution by 30%. That is how we look at it. I would like to

bring out that it is a very hard determination, but the fact that we have a number that is seemingly larger than it was a couple of years ago is actually not us building up a big fund - the big bonds, as I got a couple of letters from you, Bishop, reminding theologically, you, Church Commissioners, are keeping too much money - but actually it is the hope of a bigger Church in the future, and so that is how we look at it.

115. *Br Philip Dulson OSB (Religious Communities)* asked the Church Commissioners: Given the significant debt that the Pension Board has undertaken to buy retirement properties, would it be more ethical and profitable for the properties to become part of the investment policy of the Church of England Commissioners - and if not, why not?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The Pensions Board and the Church Commissioners are separate bodies with separate purposes and obligations. The Church Commissioners manage the Church's historic endowment fund, which supports the Church of England's ministry in perpetuity, particularly in areas of need and opportunity. Any investment made by the Church Commissioners needs to be considered in the context of our investment strategy, and taking into account our return target (CPIH+4%), risk profile and a range of other portfolio metrics, including overall existing fund composition.

The Commissioners have a significant allocation to residential property, both directly in the form of the Hyde Park Estate, Strategic Land and Farmland Portfolios, and through various indirect housing funds.

Also, the Commissioners' portfolio does in fact include some investment in the Pension Board's CHARM (Clergy Housing Assistance Retired Ministry) portfolio, as a result of providing loans in relation to retirement housing from 1983 to 2010. Since then, this portfolio investment has been reducing as part of a strategy to reduce the Commissioners' investment focus from over-exposure to the UK residential property market. Just under 300 Commissioner-financed properties currently remain in the CHARM portfolio.

116. *The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn)* asked the Church Commissioners: Staff at Church House - in particular, the Clergy Payments Team - will, no doubt, be aware of problems and frustrations being experienced with the recently introduced "People System" for clergy and employee payments. Given that many found the previous "MyView" System to be somewhat more user-friendly, could the Church Commissioners please explain why this new system has been introduced, and what progress has been made to alleviate the problems?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The new People System was introduced to replace MyView, which had come to the end of its supported lifecycle. The new People System enables us to manage people data in a consistent way and, as well as more effectively supporting the payroll processes, provides the source of information to support the Church of England to publish the National Clergy

Register, an important safeguarding commitment. For this, we needed a system that can interface in a more robust manner with other national and diocesan systems.

There is a full set of FAQs on the new People System on the Church of England website, which can be found here [People System FAQs | The Church of England](#).

Whilst the project did take longer to deliver than originally planned, we are not seeing a large number of complaints or questions beyond the expected initial questions from those who need support in using a new system. We expect that, as diocesan staff get used to using the system and clergy feel comfortable with the new interfaces, it will prove a reliable critical system for the Church's broad and complex needs.

117. *Mr Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Church Commissioners: With reference to Table 1 of Schedule 1 to GS 2299 (The Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2023), what were (a) the algorithm and (b) the actual data used to determine the apportionment for each diocese?

Mr Alan Smith (ex officio) answered as First Church Estates Commissioner: The fees in that table are calculated by reference to a formula which was agreed by the General Synod when it approved the 2014 Fees Orders, and which it has further endorsed subsequently. Explanatory note GS 1938-9X (February 2014) sets out the details. Explanatory notes GS 2299X/GS 2300X (July 2023) set out the data collection process in connection with the 2023 Orders.

The established formula provides for the calculation of a figure for the national cost of the work reported and takes into account two key variables: the average number of hours recorded over a rolling five-year period, and average hourly rates. The division in each case between the allocation of cost to the DBF and the bishop (which falls on the Church Commissioners) is long-standing and reflects the fact that there were historically two distinct offices which could be held by different people: bishops' legal secretary and the diocesan registrar (these offices are now merged in the office of the diocesan registrar). We understand that the apportionment took into account the division of work in each case between the bishops' legal secretary and the diocesan registrar before the roles were merged.

Mr Nigel Bacon: My thanks to the First Church Estates Commissioner for his first answer, which sheds light on the wide variation between dioceses in the proportion of the annual legal fees that are assigned to the diocesan bishop and, consequently, paid by the Church Commissioners rather than DBFs. Will he now undertake a review of the proportions paid by the Church Commissioners which range from 25% to 59% across the dioceses and, I have discovered, have remained unchanged for each diocese as far back as at least 1974 - we are approaching the 50th anniversary? Will he also please complete that review such that any ensuing recommendations can be incorporated into the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2024?

Mr Alan Smith: As part of our discipline of overseeing the legal fees, the Legal Department does look at that on an annual basis through our budgeting process, and I will make sure that those particular points are taken into account. The legal fees are an important part of how the Church Commissioners support the mission of the bishops and the Archbishops, and we are very disciplined around that process and we will take those into account.

PENSIONS BOARD

118. *The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Given that in General Synod's July 2023 Vote 5 debate, Clive Mather reiterated the Pension Board's commitment to house retired clergy and widow/ers in need of Church of England owned properties with guaranteed tenure and rent levels, can you tell us when the Pension Board will be bringing the proposed changes that he outlined to Synod during that debate for approval?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: We aim to publish discussion materials setting out specific ideas about how the Church might best support future cohorts of retiring stipendiary clergy with their retirement housing plans before the end of the November Group of Sessions.

The core concept is that of enabling choice for clergy about future housing, instead of focusing on just one offer at one point in ministry. Enabling choice might involve new services, products and investment across ministry, to encourage retirement planning, overcome barriers to home ownership that stipendiary clergy face, and open doors to different retirement housing choices. These new services would sit alongside continued provision of Church retirement housing to the extent the Church is willing to fund it.

We are looking to test these ideas with the Church through a discussion process, and welcome the engagement of Synod members in this process, whether formally or informally. (Formal Synod business is determined by its Business Committee.) We want to know which ideas resonate so that an informed view can be taken as the Church determines priorities for the next triennium.

To be clear, none of the proposals require, imply or involve change for existing residents.

The Revd Christopher Blunt: Thanks very much for the announcement of the new scheme for clergy retirement housing coming out today or tomorrow, and thank you for clarifying that that still means no change for existing residents, though oddly, I hear it is them who are receiving the brochures about it today. But, anyway, they seem to be landing on door mats. My question is: will the new choice of other rental providers the Pensions Board seeks to offer to retiring clergy provide the same security of tenure and capped rents as the current CHARM scheme?

Mr Clive Mather: Let us be clear, the document that is coming out - and I think there will be a paper on this tomorrow to Synod and it will be available on the web to everybody possibly tonight, certainly tomorrow - is a consultation document. This is not a proposal. This looks at what has been happening in the housing space for us over the last couple of years in terms of the changing economics, in terms of the changing demographics and in terms of the changing nature of ministry right across the country.

In response to that, thinking about, yes, we could continue with the current schemes but at an enormous cost, or we could think differently about the stewardship of our money and our clergy. In that, it puts forward four pillars describing the options that we could consider, subject to your views. We are genuinely inviting views. These are imaginative proposals. Some of them are implementable very quickly. In fact, we are already starting to test some of those just as a matter of good governance now. But we will not land on a proposal until, certainly, next year.

The closing date, I think, for responses is the end of January, so please do respond by then. We will then update Synod with the answers and their responses next year. We will then formulate what we believe would be a considered set of proposals. This will not be one scheme. This will be a whole series of different approaches at different stages of ministry. Let me be quite clear, one of the real curses of our past has been we have tackled the issue of housing at the end of ministry rather than at the start.

My wonderful Chief Executive, John Ball, characterised it as if an asteroid is heading towards Earth, and it is 10 billion light years away, you only need to deflect this by 0.00001% and it misses Earth by thousands of miles, but you wait until the last minute, and the only option is a nuclear deterrent. That is what we are trying to do, but this is not a scheme. Within that scheme we will, of course, take every consideration around rents, around safeguarding, around affordability and so on, but please participate.

119. *The Revd Canon Katrina Scott (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Following the news from the Pension Board that they are preparing to change their provision of CHARM housing to working with other providers, is the Pension Board able to guarantee that retired clergy and their dependents housed by other providers are not at any risk, safeguarding, financial or otherwise?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: We aim to publish discussion materials setting out specific ideas about how the Church might best support future cohorts of retiring stipendiary clergy with their retirement housing plans before the end of the November Group of Sessions. These ideas are centred around how the Church might enable more choice for clergy, through implementing new services during ministry to sit alongside a portfolio of Church retirement properties available at retirement.

None of these ideas require, imply or involve any change for existing residents.

Working with other providers to open doors to different choices for clergy is certainly part of our thinking. Indeed the Board already supports retirees in considering options with other providers, where that might offer the best plan for their retirement. There are some wonderful Christian charities, almshouses and other providers who offer retirement housing to clergy, and those seeking housing should not be constrained to the property we can offer for want of information.

Appropriately managing safeguarding, financial and other risks is always at the heart of our thinking.

We hope that Synod members will engage with the forthcoming conversation, which invites the Church to consider ideas that put clergy in the driving seat of their retirement housing plans.

The Revd Katrina Scott: Thank you very much for your encouraging response, and the promise of that consultation document. Can you confirm, or can you commit within the consultation, to reflect on whether there might be the possibility for there to be no change for residents around the right to move property from one to another should the need arise, for example, around lack of mobility or change in needs?

Mr Clive Mather: I commit to looking at everything, including that, yes.

120. *The Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: How many of the Pension Board's current stock of retirement housing is empty or being rented to private tenants outside of their housing of retired clergy and dependents remit?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: The Pensions Board has a portfolio of 1,170 rental properties. As at 1 September 2023, excluding those which are in the process of being sold or prepared for new tenants, there were 18 empty properties. These empty properties are typically recently vacated and pending surveyor reports to inform asset management decisions to dispose or retain for future tenants.

At the same date, there were 13 properties externally let to private tenants. This usually arises when a property has been reserved for a clergy household in advance of their retirement, and in the interim the house is let on a short-term basis to supplement income, reduce costs, and provide short-term accommodation for others.

121. *Mrs Susan Cavill (Derby)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Currently tenants of the Pensions Board's retirement housing scheme have to take responsibility for reporting problems with their houses. Why does the Pensions Board not undertake quinquennial inspections of its properties?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: There is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, telephone helpline for residents to report maintenance concerns

with their homes, as is best practice for all landlords. Where a maintenance concern arises, we would want this to be reported straight away, not wait for a scheduled stock condition survey.

We comprehensively refurbish rental properties prior to them being occupied by new residents so that building works can then be kept to a minimum and customers can enjoy living in their homes without the inconvenience of building projects.

Inspection programmes include annual gas (or equivalent) safety checks. We have just completed a portfolio-wide electrical inspection programme, and – subject to funding – expect to embark on a portfolio-wide stock condition survey next year, with a particular focus on those properties occupied by the same tenants for a longer period of time, as such properties sometimes require additional maintenance during tenancies.

A quinquennial inspection regime applies to the legacy mortgage properties, where the maintenance responsibility rests with the resident.

Mrs Susan Cavill: Does relying upon residents in CHARM properties to report problems when they consider them to be a problem result in an increase in repair costs?

Mr Clive Mather: I would hope not, in the sense that there would be an immediacy between the problem and the redress, and that should surely save money. However, implicit in your question - and, forgive me, I am going to have to suppose this - there could be defects of which the resident is not aware which are then exposed in the full survey. As the paper says, we will be introducing that full survey again next year and so that will pick up, especially for those who have been in properties for a long period, whether there are any major issues of which the resident is not currently aware. Does that address the question?

Mrs Susan Cavill: Yes.

Professor Peter Harris (Southwell & Nottingham): Without a quinquennial review, what are the plans to support the move to net zero in our housing estate?

Mr Clive Mather: I think that strays quite a long way from the question, if I am honest. I think the issue of net zero is much, much bigger and, as yet, the pathway to that for us is not clear. It is part of the consultation, and it is certainly a huge part of our forward costs, but I think we will have to address that at another time, in another place, in order to understand exactly how we will do that.

122. *The Revd Robert Thompson (London)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Can the Pensions Board explain why, as a charitable housing provider responsible for retired Church of England clergy, you adopted a government formula of target rents?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: The Board adopted the “target rent” approach, as a way of calculating the starting rent for its properties from 2015, after extensive consultation with the Church through 2013-2014. The approach is similar to that used in the social housing sector, although the Board is classed as a private landlord.

A target rent-style formula offered a fairer, more transparent way of setting starting rents for retirement properties, while ensuring homes continue to be offered at a significant discount to comparable local properties.

Please also note the question takes a rather expansive view of the Board’s charitable responsibilities. The Board is responsible for operating the Church’s clergy retirement housing provision, within the funding available. In doing so, the Board’s responsibilities to the Church and residents are subject to many requirements, including landlord compliance, good stewardship of resources, and guidance from this synodical forum.

The Revd Robert Thompson: Given that many of us are increasingly aware of retired colleagues who are facing real hardship, would the Pensions Board look again at the rent formula?

Mr Clive Mather: We are acutely aware of the cost of living and the impact that has right across society. As a Church, it is a huge part of our life, not just those who serve within the Church but all of those in wider society that we seek to help. So, yes, we are acutely aware of it, and we encourage everybody who has financial challenges as workers of the Church to be in touch with us. There are ways we can help, and there are people and organisations that we can signpost, which will bring substantive redress. I think the issue of the formula going forward will be hugely dependent upon the nature of the schemes that we, collectively, choose to adopt. I think that will have to come back when we have the responses to the consultation.

123. *Ms Fiona MacMillan (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Why does the Pension Board not take into account the income of its tenants when setting rents?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: Prior to 2015, rents for retirement properties were set as a straight percentage of household income. This approach was changed after extensive consultation with the Church and residents. Setting rents based purely on income had several challenges, not least, it led to unfair outcomes between residents, e.g. some were paying a lot more than others for similar properties in the same areas. The process of calculating rents was also difficult and intrusive, as households were required to disclose extensive personal financial information.

A “target rent” model was adopted in 2015. This model, similar to that used in the social housing sector, is designed to provide a fair way of setting rents while ensuring properties continue to be offered at a significant discount compared to market rates. The target rent

takes account of local circumstances, ensuring that properties are affordable for the areas in which they are located (in line with the approach advocated by the *Coming Home* report).

However, there is a genuine question about whether household income should be considered in determining eligibility for Church-subsidised rental retirement housing, alongside savings and length of service. This will be picked up in the major discussion process about to start.

Ms Fiona McMillan: I wonder how many of the current residents are widows or widowers without full Church pensions, and how many are early retired clergy without state pensions?

Mr Clive Mather: Fiona, I honestly do not know the answer to that. It is something we could look at but, again, as I said previously, I would encourage everybody to pick up the phone and talk to us.

124. *The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Noting that the rent for those using the CHARM housing scheme is set at a “Social Rent”. Noting that this amount varies across the dioceses of the Church of England. Noting that not all residents draw a full Church of England pension:

- What is the average rent charged in each diocese?
- Where a cleric (other than bishops and senior staff) is in receipt of a full pension, what percentage of that pension is spent on paying rent?
- What additional help is offered to those who are not in receipt of a full Church of England or state pension?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: The target rent approach is described in answers to other questions. Note that this approach is similar to that used in the social housing sector but the Board is classed as a private landlord.

The median rent for a Church retirement property is c.£680 per month. The typical Church retirement property is a 3-bedroom detached house or bungalow, though this average includes both larger and smaller properties. Rents vary across the country.

By way of comparison, ONS data suggest monthly rent for a 3-bed property (all types) in England is £900 (median) and £1,039 (mean).

Data by diocese is not readily available, and may not be particularly helpful, given significant variations in property and rental prices even within dioceses, however rents for Church retirement properties will largely follow the variation in rents/property prices across the country.

All properties are advertised with clear rent information, and the Board seeks to offer a variety of properties to cater for different budgets, locational preferences, etc.

As set out in GS 2330T, a cleric retiring on a full clergy and state pension would have an annual gross income of c.£27,900. Assuming no other household income/spouse pension (i.e. a single person in a 3-bed property) the average rent equates to c.29% of this income.

Additional support offered to all residents includes access to advice on eligibility for state entitlements, and a charitable grant scheme which provides an additional monthly grant for those on low incomes and few savings.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin: The law of averages is a hard one. It is why in my original question I had asked for a diocesan breakdown. I know in my own parish, I have the 10% most wealthy in the country and the 10% most deprived in the same area. In a supplementary question I would ask: when the Pensions Board refers to choice in relation to its housing provision, how does it recognise the need for retired clergy to be close to family, support networks and health service providers that may prove impossible in more expensive areas of the country where the agreed rent is higher than the average given in the response to my question?

Mr Clive Mather: You, of course, rightly draw attention to one key aspect of the decision that the individual makes as to what property and where, and there are others. This is always going to be a trade-off. Whether you are in ministry or not, the property you buy or rent, and where you do so, is going to be a compromise, and people will have to look at the situation.

We offer very significant choice, and we do all we can to meet the genuine needs of those who need to be near family, perhaps because of their mental or physical health, because of their financial circumstances and so on, and we will continue to do that. As we look forward to new solutions, I hope it is going to become easier. I am not going to pretend that it can always be done because, as you rightly say, some areas are very different from others. Thank you for your grace around the question of a diocesan statistical exercise. I just would honestly say to you the cost of doing that for us would outweigh any particular information that might come.

125. *The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Noting the answer given to Q236 at the July 2023 Group of Sessions, please can the Pension Board explain how a decision to increase CHARM rent by 10.1% is “in line with the increases in clergy and state pension”?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: The state pension increased by 10.1% in April 2023. Clergy pensions in payment also increased by 10.1% in April 2023.

It should be noted that the guaranteed increase to clergy pensions is 5% or 3.5% depending on the period of service. Following excellent investment performance, and

improvements in scheme funding, the Board was able to exercise a discretionary power to override the guarantees and provide an additional increase in April 2023. The Church Commissioners took a parallel decision in relation to pre-1998 clergy pensions in payment.

126. *Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham)* asked the Chair of the Pensions Board: Noting that the amount of a clergy pension at retirement is linked to the previous year's National Minimum Stipend, which increased by 1% between 2020 and 2022; whereas inflation cumulatively from 2020 up to date totals almost 18% (my calculation, using CPIH): what action could be taken to respond to the reduction in the real value of pensions for clergy entering retirement during this period of high inflation?

Mr Clive Mather (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Pensions Board: Although the figures quoted do not appear to be entirely comparable due to reference dates for pensions/stipends increases, etc., I am grateful to Ian for highlighting this important issue, which is further discussed in GS 2330T.

The Board's role is to administer the clergy pension scheme according to the Rules set by Synod. The policy for the NMS is the responsibility of the Central Stipends Authority.

Starting pensions are based on the previous year's National Minimum Stipend. Hence: 1) to the extent that the NMS does not keep up with inflation, the real value in the starting pension will reduce, and 2) there is a lag effect.

Over the last decade, the increase in starting pension and pensions in payment have been fairly close. The difference has been more pronounced in this current year (2023-2024), and the Board is exploring this issue in more detail in its meetings this autumn.

Mr Ian Boothroyd: Noting that the problem of declining real value is, in part, related to the different reference dates, does the Pensions Board have the power to link the starting pension at retirement to the current National Minimum Stipend rather than the previous year's NMS?

Mr Clive Mather: The answer is no, we do not. We are mandated legally to administer the rules given to us. That could be done. It would require a change to the rules and legislation, but it could be done.

But let me in the spirit of your question, which I very much honour, make two comments. First of all, there is genuine need, and we are looking at short-term changes, whether that is pensions or stipend or both, together with the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council, and we will continue to do that to see what might be possible. Longer term, there are better solutions out there, and I do hope, at another time, I can talk to Synod about the possibility of an integrated Church pension which brings all the various funds together and which would completely address that issue with much better outcomes for all members.

The Chair: As we are about to change over, can I just remind those who are responding to questions that, under Standing Order 116.4, no answer to a supplementary question may exceed one minute, and so let us try to stay with that.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP

127. *The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: Does the Ethical Investment Advisory Group guidance place any restriction on investment in companies that profit from abortion, and if not, why not?

128. *Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: As the Church of England's policy is to oppose abortion in all but the rarest and most extreme cases, does EIAG guidance ensure that CCLA excludes investment in abortion provision, as is the policy of other church bodies, such as the Methodist Central Board of Finance and the Roman Catholic Church?

The Bishop of Manchester (The Rt Revd David Walker) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group: With permission, I will take these two questions together.

The EIAG's ethical investment advice and the investment policies of the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) - the Church Commissioners, the Church of England Pensions Board and the CBF Church of England Funds, managed by CCLA - recognise that the work of many companies is morally complex. In many cases, the majority of a company's production may serve the common good, whereas the same company may have a smaller activity in more problematic areas and engagement with these companies is an important stewardship tool. We do not have advice on every kind of investment or every moral issue, although we are gradually building up our range of advice, developed largely in response to requests from the NIBs for consideration of a particular issue.

It is not possible or morally advisable to impose a blanket ban on every company with any link, however small, to the provision of abortion, since to do so could involve disinvestment from, for instance, major pharmaceutical companies or medical supply companies which make a huge contribution to human flourishing worldwide.

The Revd Paul Benfield: Will the Ethical Investment Advisory Group look into this matter and report back to Synod, please?

The Bishop of Manchester: We can certainly take this back to the EIAG and look into it. If we make a decision on any particular policy advice, then that will be made public in the normal way.

The Chair: On the previous one, go ahead, Mr Scowen.

Mr Clive Scowen: Well, it amounts to the same thing because they are being taken together. Can I just clarify with the Bishop of Manchester, is it the case currently that there is no restriction of any sort on investment in companies that profit from abortion?

The Bishop of Manchester: The way in which the EIAG works, and the National Investing Bodies, is primarily through engagement rather than divestment. I think it would be very easy to go back to a policy of simply divesting from anything that anybody in the Church of England has a moral difficulty with, but I think we would find the investable universe become very small very, very quickly. We prefer the National Investing Bodies and the EIAG to look at how we engage with companies who have got products or services they provide which present for us some moral obstacle. So that will be the way in which we continue to work.

The Revd Jonathan Macy (Southwark): As you will hear, I have a stammer. Please bear with that. We are told this is a complex issue; yes, that is why we are here. But we have been able to work through them in the past. When we got out of the oil, an impact of that would have been on plastics which are heavily used in healthcare, and we worked that one out. Why cannot we do that same work for the protection of the unborn?

The Bishop of Manchester: I note what you say there. I am not sure I can add much to what has been said before and what is in the written answer. On the whole, it is pharmaceutical and other medical companies who have some exposure to the abortion services provision, and it is almost impossible to disentangle that. If we were to pull out of these companies, we would be pulling out of companies who do a massive amount of good. We have pulled out of the oil and gas majors because they were primarily producing oil and producing gas. They were not companies who had a very minority interest in that. I think we still have thresholds below which we do not consider investment in oil and gas by a larger company to be material. I cannot imagine there are any companies we are invested in whose exposure to abortion is above those kind of low thresholds.

FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION

129. *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: Did the Faith and Order Commission provide the House of Bishops with advice on the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* between February and October 2023; and, if so, could General Synod please be provided with copies the advice (if in writing) or the gist of the advice (if given orally)?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes) replied as Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: The Faith and Order Commission was not asked to provide advice on the draft text of the PLF.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr: Many, many thanks, Bishop, for the answer, and particularly for the work that you and FAOC do. Upon what subject was FAOC asked to advise and what was the gist of the advice?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: The Faith and Order Commission is made up of 16 people, six bishops and 10 academics, and I want to thank those academics for giving their time freely to the Church. We were asked specifically to look at whether Holy Matrimony and civil marriage were substantially separate institutions. We considered that theologically, and considered that they were overlapping and distinct, so that they were not entirely distinct and separate.

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): Does FAOC have the advice and could Synod have it in full, please?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: I am sorry, I do not quite understand your question.

The Revd Matthew Beer: Where the question was asked that the Faith and Order Commission was not asked to provide advice, does FAOC have advice and could Synod have it?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: We were not asked to provide advice on the draft text of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

130. *The Revd Jake Madin (York)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: What theological work has the House done on the nature of “things indifferent” (*adiaphora*) in Scripture and the tradition of the Church catholic, and whether issues around the doctrine of marriage are included within this or not?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes) replied as Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: These questions have been part of LLF conversations throughout, and are reflected in the LLF book, pp. 230-234. In addition, the Faith and Order Commission also explored these matters in *Communion and Disagreement* (GS Misc 1139)

(https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/communion_and_disagreement_faoc_report_gs_misc_1139.pdf).

Both of these highlight the fact that a simple *diaphora/adiaphora* distinction may be too crude, and that there exist different types and levels of disagreement, with different shapes of consequences for the life of the Church. Significant disagreement can arise without it necessarily be a disagreement over credal matter and therefore leading to schism, yet of enough importance to have consequences for the ordering of our common life. The LLF book further considers the complexity of the current situation, where there is not only disagreement over the question we are discussing, but disagreement over the type of disagreement we are having.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham): Can I just ask why you have particularly picked on the phrase, “Disagreement over credal matters therefore leading to schism” when, through the history of the Church, there have been issues which have led to schism which were not credal. For example, questions around corruption in the Church or misuse of power and all those sort of things could also lead to schism. What other considerations might be looked at in this?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: The question was asking us to look at things indifferent and whether the issues around *Living in Love and Faith* were things indifferent. We do not consider the doctrine of marriage to be a thing indifferent. It is not a credal matter, but it is a serious matter of doctrine and it is rooted in creation and affirmed by our Lord, and it is held by the great majority of the Church catholic.

131. *Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: In the Church of England, how is doctrine formed and agreed, by whom, what are its sources and where is it recorded?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes) replied as Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: The Church of England is not a confessional Church, and, as such, does not have a recorded body of doctrine formulated systematically by subject. Doctrine emerges out of the consideration of Scripture, Creeds, historic formularies and the ongoing life of the people of God. It is reflected in our liturgies, as well as in teaching documents issued from the House of Bishops, FAOC and reports agreed by Synod.

Ms Sammi Tooze (York): Is the House of Bishops able to issue teaching documents that help to frame doctrine in its own right, or do such documents require the approval of a third party such as Synod or the Faith and Order Commission before being considered part of the Church's doctrine?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: That seems to be a question that should be put to the Presidents of the House of Bishops but, as far as I am aware, the House of Bishops can, indeed, issue papers in its own right.

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford): Canon A 5 famously says that, “The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teaching the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular, such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The *Book of Common Prayer* and the Ordinal”, words written verbatim into the Worship and Doctrine Measure. Can you just clarify for us that, formally, that is still where the Church of England finds its doctrine?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: That is indeed still where the Church of England finds its doctrine, Andrew, and you will know that as well I do.

132. *Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: What is the most recent statement concerning the incompatibility of belief in universal salvation with Christian faith as the Church of England has received it (see Articles 17, 18)?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes) replied as Chair of the Faith and Order Commission: The 1995 report by the Doctrine Commission *The Mystery of Salvation* argued that moral and spiritual choices have real and ultimate significance, that it contradicts the nature of love to think that anyone can be compulsorily installed in heaven, and that hell is choosing a path of complete opposition to God.

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

133. *The Revd Howard Stoker (Norwich)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Given the “important and vital contribution grandparents make to the family, society and to the church” will the Church of England affirm grandparents and the elderly by following the example of the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Catholic Grandparents Association, and adopt the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in the universal Church Calendar, this being the nearest Sunday to the Feast of St Anne and St Joachim, (26th July), and provide appropriate liturgical material and encourage parishes to help grandparents pass on the faith to their grandchildren?

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Thank you for your suggestion. The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly was instituted by Pope Francis in 2021, and prayers have been issued by Roman Catholic bishops’ conferences on a yearly basis since then. Since (like many themed occasions of this type) it falls on a Sunday, it is unlikely that full liturgical provision would be made. The Liturgical Commission will consider whether to issue material for use as part of its standing brief to develop topical prayers for use in the Church of England.

134. *Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Could the Liturgical Commission provide an update on what progress has been made thus far by the joint project on gendered language, and outline a provisional timetable they are working towards so that Synod will be able to consider new liturgical material in due course?

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The working group (comprising members and staff of the Liturgical Commission as well as of the Faith and Order Commission) has now been constituted. Its brief is to consider the best use of current liturgical material, not at this stage to draft new liturgical material. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for December. The intended outcome of its work is a guidance paper with a practical focus, informed by theological and liturgical scholarship, for the benefit of those responsible for writing, planning, and leading worship in the Church of England.

135. *The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: Press reports over recent years have noted cases of clergy and bishops saying prayers and giving blessings for a wide range of things, including toilet blocks, burger vans, beer kegs, gritting trucks and sewage works. What is the formal liturgical basis for such blessings?

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: There has been a long-standing theological conversation over the nature of blessing, including whether inanimate objects can or should be blessed. The contemporary liturgical practice of the Church of England, shared by the Roman Catholic Church and others, is to pray that such objects may be a blessing to those who use them (so-called invocative blessing) rather than praying for the objects to be blessed intrinsically (so-called constitutive blessing). Examples in Common Worship include: “By the power of your Spirit, may your blessing rest on those who are anointed with this oil in your name”; “By your blessing, let this plough be a sign of all that you promise to us”.

136. *Mr Richard Brown (Chelmsford)* asked the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The modern version of the liturgy of ordination of a bishop includes the promises to “teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it” and “to refute error”. The BCP version of this also included the phrase “both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same”. When was the omission of this final phrase approved by Synod?

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) replied on behalf of the Chair of the Liturgical Commission: The promises in the BCP Ordinal and the Common Worship Ordinal cover very similar ground, though the modern liturgy does so in a more succinct fashion. The Common Worship Ordinal reads: “Will you teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it, will you refute error, and will you hand on entire the faith that is entrusted to you?” The BCP Ordinal remains the authorized standard. The Common Worship Ordinal was authorized as an alternative by General Synod in November 2006, and received significant backing at Final Approval stage in voting by Houses: Bishops 25-0, Clergy 155-4, Laity 175-8.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham): When it mentions the promises to “teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it”, has there been any work done or any reflection of whether there should be exceptions to any of this doctrine which is found, as you have earlier stated, from Canon A 5 in the form released in the Ordinal and the *Book of Common Prayer*?

The Revd Andrew Atherstone: The Ordinal is very serious. The promises that deacons and clergies and bishops take on ordination are extremely serious, and I hope taken to heart. The Liturgical Commission has not considered it since the Common Worship Ordinal was agreed by this Synod.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul: So there are no exceptions, thank you.

NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

137. *Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: What review has been undertaken by the National Society and/or the Education department to review the widely used material produced by PSHE Association and other third parties which at key points contradict the doctrine of the Church on marriage and sexuality, and what resources have been offered to schools to equip them to communicate the Church's teaching in this area?

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society: It is the responsibility of Diocesan Boards of Education to provide advice and guidance to their schools in this area. It is the responsibility of schools to determine which resources they use and to ensure that the Church of England's teaching about marriage is understood.

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](#), including a link to the Goodness and Mercy resources produced by the Diocese of Bristol as an example.

138. *Ms Christiana Olomolaiye (Bristol)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: In the written response to Question 4 in July, the Bishop of Durham suggested that there had been no research on the effectiveness of the Church's schools work on young people coming to faith. However, in the response to supplementary questions, he did note the 2021 research of Francis *et al* which showed that there was zero measurable impact. What further research is planned to explore this question, and how will both this research and any future research shape the strategy of the National Society and the Education department?

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society: Professor Leslie Francis is a prolific and able researcher and academic in this area. The Chief Education Officer has been in conversation with him, and Professor Francis is very clear that his research cited above is not about young people coming to faith or the effectiveness or impact of Church of England schools in that journey, but is specifically about the attitudes of church-going young people in one diocese towards their church and Christian living.

One of his conclusions in this research is that it is "students from non-white backgrounds and attending churches in deprived areas who are most likely to be attending church schools. This is an interesting and important finding in light of an accusation often levelled against church schools that they tend to prioritise students from white and privileged backgrounds".

Our own Growing Faith Foundation is focused on how the relationship between church, school and home is vital for ministry with children and young people, and we are ensuring careful research on how the impact of this is built into all work in this area.

Ms Christiana Olomolaiye: I can see that Professor Francis has clarified that his research does not cover the effectiveness of schools in bringing young people to faith. Now that we know, can you confirm that there will be a specific group set up to research the effectiveness of Church of England schools in bringing young people to faith? Because Growing Faith has said they will build it in all aspects of their work, but seeing that one of the main objectives of Church of England schools is to promote the Christian faith I think we ought to have a specific and measurable way of ---

The Chair: I am sorry, can we just have the question and let the person who is answering respond? Ask the question, please.

Ms Christiana Olomolaiye: OK, thank you. Could you, please, confirm that there will be specific research to look at the effectiveness of the schools in bringing young people to faith? And, also, could there be a KPI - key performance indicator - for all C of E schools to see how many they actually bring to faith within a set time period?

The Bishop of Durham: No, I could not make that promise because that would take a lot of background research before we were ever able to do so. However, Christ Church, Canterbury and Nexus are doing some such research, and their early results are that Church of England schools are extremely effective in drawing children and young people towards the Christian faith, but no commitment on further research at this stage.

Professor Peter Harris (Southwell & Nottingham): Thank you for that answer, Bishop, but the concern I think of many of the academic community is that research that you are indicating is more likely to be beneficial if it is longitudinal rather than just snapshot, as the Nexus work is likely to be. What funding opportunities are being sought in order to encourage longitudinal research in the way that you have indicated?

The Bishop of Durham: None that I am aware of.

139. *Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth)* asked the Chair of the National Society Council: Has the National Society considered the view expressed by the Diocese of Derby that Church of England doctrine poses a safeguarding risk to children, whereas the campaign group Educate and Celebrate which aims to “smash heteronormativity” should be welcomed into Church of England schools?

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied as Chair of the National Society: We do not understand this to be the position of the Diocese of Derby. Please contact the Diocese of Derby for clarification.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt: I want to ask if the National Society will produce resources to help Church schools and clergy that are involved with schools effectively to counter the influence of activist groups, such as Educate and Celebrate, and to help them to uphold the C of E doctrine on sex and marriage as wholesome and beneficial in modern society?

The Bishop of Durham: I think I am being asked to express an opinion about a particular organisation which is not appropriate for me to do. We encourage dioceses rather than the National Society to work on this with local schools.

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

140. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity: Given the recent public statements by an ordained minister within the Free Church of England to the effect that Anglican women clergy are “witches”, and the failure of the Free Church of England to operate a clergy discipline procedure equivalent to the Clergy Discipline Measure, will the Council request the House of Bishops to conduct a formal review to determine whether it will be appropriate to recommend a revocation of the Church of England’s recognition of the Orders of the Free Church of England in accordance with the provisions of section 1A(5) of the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes) replied as Vice-Chair of the Council for Christian Unity: Recognition of another Church’s orders is an ecclesiastical judgement, Church to Church, determined primarily by doctrine, church order, and ecclesial density (i.e. “spread” and longevity), and not by the opinions of individual members of that Church, nor by its disciplinary actions; it does not imply that Permission to Officiate (PTO) will always be granted to individuals applying to exercise ministry in the Church of England. When a minister of another such Church wishes to participate in ministry in the Church of England, there must be proper scrutiny of the individual’s fitness, and PTO granted or withheld accordingly. There is no *prima facie* case for revoking the (long-standing) recognition of the orders of the Free Church of England, and I resist the suggestion that the cited section of the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 could be used in this way.

Mr Clive Billenness: Bishop, will the Council write to the two primis of the Free Church of England drawing to their attention the concern expressed in this Synod about one of their ministers' public remarks because of the hurt this has caused amongst our female clergy colleagues? I can, of course, provide documentary evidence to support such a letter.

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe: In fact, the relevant Bishop of the Free Church in England has been in touch with me expressing his profound apologies for this incident, and saying that it will be dealt with following their own internal procedures.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

141. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: At the July 2023 Group of Sessions, Archbishop Justin expressed the laudable aspiration that more could and should be done to provide affordable and secure housing for employed and salaried chaplains and youth workers/ministers and others, as part of their terms and conditions of service. Will the Archbishops' Council, and/or other relevant bodies, prepare advice and guidance to dioceses to encourage and equip them to achieve this aspiration? And if so, by when?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: As part of the pursuit of our national Vision and Strategy work is beginning to develop a comprehensive understanding of the terms and conditions for those employed within Church of England contexts to work with children and young people. This work is due to report to the 30,000 Project Board chaired by the Bishop of Leicester in mid-2024.

Mr Adrian Greenwood: Given the strategic objective towards mixed ecology as the norm, and given the need for non-parochial ministers such as chaplains and youth ministers to have secure, sustainable and affordable housing from which to base their ministry, does the Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee recognise that, as well as to better understand the terms and conditions of employment of such ministers within the Church of England, substantial additional financial resources are also likely to be required in order to achieve the desired objective, either new money or funds diverted from existing sources?

Mr Carl Hughes: Just, first of all, on terms and conditions, that is something which is actively being pursued by the 30,000 Project Board at present and further guidance on terms and conditions for youth ministers and youth workers will be forthcoming. In terms of the additional resources to assist with housing of youth workers and the like, clearly that is something which dioceses are able to take into account in their submissions to the SMMIB. In terms of providing additional resources beyond the grants available from the SMMIB, there are a lot of calls on the Archbishops' Council's resources, and so I think that, in the first instance, taking that through the SMMIB grants system would be most appropriate.

142. *The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox)* asked the President of the Archbishops' Council: What plans does the Archbishops' Council have in place to support a systematic approach to land use, as set out in the *Coming Home* report from the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community?

143. *Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: How is the Archbishops' Council assisting dioceses and parishes that want to support those needing truly affordable homes both now and in the future?

144. *Mr Robert Perry (Truro)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What practical plans does the Archbishops' Council have in place for a national response to the housing crisis that would support dioceses like Truro, where housing is an overwhelming priority for local communities?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With your permission Chair, I will answer the questions from the Bishop of Sheffield, Mrs Suckling and Mr Perry together.

The Archbishops' Council currently has very limited resource to focus on affordable housing, and no staff with specialist expertise, in part as it owns no suitable land or property itself. However, its social impact investment programme has made a commitment to the Women in Safe Homes Fund. This fund helps address the housing crisis for women escaping domestic abuse, leaving the criminal justice system and at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The Council is in the process of considering proposals from the Archbishops' Housing Advisory Board that seek to respond to the challenges in *Coming Home*. The Council will consider the opportunities and risks of the proposals, and will have to assess them alongside other current and likely future calls for support from the sums it has available.

Mr Robert Perry: In the second paragraph there you state that the Archbishops' Council, in part, owns no suitable land or property, which I accept. But, of course, the Archbishops' Council does have considerable influence and considerable powers of persuasion, and I wonder, therefore, whether the Archbishops' Council would be willing to use those powers to assist dioceses like Truro which do wish to do what they can to help the considerable shortage of affordable housing in their areas?

Mr Carl Hughes: As I said in my answer, this is a matter which we are considering in detail at the moment. One of the things that we are considering is the extent to which we might be able to provide, centrally, some support for dioceses in terms of the development of land. That is something that is currently under consideration. In terms of the encouragement of dioceses, clearly each diocese is a separate independent charity, and I will continue to do my best to encourage dioceses to do all sorts of things that they may or may not wish otherwise to do.

145. *Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson (Gloucester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What action is the Archbishops' Council taking to support better stewardship of Church land resources that could lead to more funding at a parish level, as put forward by the Housing Advisory Board under Bishop Guli?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Council is in the process of considering a number of proposals from the Archbishops' Housing Advisory Board that seek to respond to the challenges in *Coming Home*. The Council will consider the opportunities and risks of the proposals, and will

have to assess them alongside other current and likely future calls for support from the sums it has available.

Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson: Please can I ask, in assessing the opportunities presented by the Housing Advisory Board against the current and likely future calls for support, what estimated annual return will the Archbishops' Council assume as a consequence of increased income from good stewardship of Church land resources in terms of millions of pounds and as a percentage return?

Mr Carl Hughes: Can I just clarify your question? Are you talking about the return that a diocese would expect to get from development or a return that the Archbishops' Council would expect?

Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson: I am asking what the Church could anticipate nationally would be returned annually by the good stewardship by the dioceses of their land resources?

Mr Carl Hughes: Robert, that is a very fair question. I do not think I am in a position to be able to give you a precise number, but I can assure you that, in the consideration that we are currently giving to moving forward to the recommendations from *Coming Home*, that that will certainly be something that we will be taking into account. We would want to ensure that, particularly in the development of diocesan land, an appropriate return is being achieved. This is still somewhat work in progress.

146. *The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn)* asked the Archbishops' Council: Following the publication of the report *Evaluation of Transforming Wigan*, which shows that the investment of £1.2 million of Strategic Development Funds in Wigan has failed to halt the decline in attendance or financial giving, will the Archbishops' Council be re-considering grants to similar schemes in Liverpool and other dioceses?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Church of England has been in persistent attendance decline for many years. This is the case in Wigan, which was financially the most challenged part of the diocese. *Transforming Wigan* was ambitious, even without Covid impact. Missionally, the evaluation shows some positive outcomes to January 2023, which continue to develop. September 2023 shows 490 people regularly worship in 19 new worshipping communities. 930 further people meet at least monthly in 33 mission initiatives. These numbers are in addition to regular attenders of 1,150 quoted in the evaluation as attending existing churches (which did not include data from all existing Wigan churches). While that would not overcome loss in attendance at traditional church, 2015-2022, a revised estimate would put the decline over the period at -12%. This compares with -32% reported across Liverpool Diocese (though the inclusion of fresh expressions in the latter figure may not be comprehensive). The financial position remains more challenging.

Across SDF, each investment is reviewed annually and evaluated at its conclusion. Clearly, some missional development projects will yield more benefits than others, which

is the nature of the programme. £1.2 million was the total investment in *Transforming Wigan*. £0.9m was SDF funding; £0.3m from the Diocese of Liverpool's own funds.

147. *Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: How much money was invested in the Wigan SDF scheme, and how many full-time evangelists could that have funded over a five-year period at the usual rates of remuneration and provision?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: £1.2 million over 7 years was the total investment in *Transforming Wigan*, of which £0.9 million was from SDF funding; £0.3 million was from the Diocese of Liverpool's own funds. Assuming an evangelist has a broadly similar level of costs to that of an incumbent, we calculate that 2.5 full-time evangelists could have been employed for 5 years if the SDF grant had been differently applied.

148. *The Revd Mark Miller (Durham)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Parish Buying is able to demonstrate that the Energy Basket prices are lower than the variable rates of energy, however many parishes will not be on variable rates and will have negotiated with other providers or brokers rates which are also lower than the variable rate (or will have been approached by providers/brokers with an offer of such rates). What steps have been taken by Parish Buying to ensure that prices in the Energy Basket are lower than a parish could achieve through other energy procurement routes?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Energy Basket in Parish Buying has fixed prices for a 12 month period. It is able to do this as it buys energy in advance, benefiting from economies of scale to offer significant savings for its 3,500 parishes. For parishes who wish certainty over prices for a longer period, Parish Buying also offers fixed-term contracts. As with all fixed-term contracts, the customer may benefit initially but it may be more expensive than shorter term or variable rate contracts depending on the fluctuations in energy costs. As well as the financial savings, Parish Buying's energy products reduce the administration of energy procurement and also protect parishes from rogue brokers, as well as eliminating the need for credit checks. The Parish Buying power procurement contract comprises an allocation of power generated by the Hornsea wind farm in the North Sea. The wind farm's generation is classified as premium pure green, which aligns with our Net Zero Carbon 2030 aspirations.

The Revd Mark Miller: Carl, thank you for your answer and it is also, may I say, a delight to see you answering these questions in your new role. I hope it is going well. There have been some concerns I have seen published that Parish Buying Energy Basket prices are not the most competitive available, so how do Parish Buying Energy Basket prices compare to the prices available from brokers or other providers, as opposed to the comparison to the variable rates which we have seen published?

Mr Carl Hughes: This is always a tricky area because we are negotiating our Energy Basket at a point in time with a particular supplier. Over the ensuing period of that contract, it is quite possible, as would be the case when everyone in this room negotiates and agrees their insurance deal or their electricity deal at home that, because of changes in the market, you will get disparities over time that may be better value or less good value. All I can say is that I am very confident that, at the time at which we are negotiating the Energy Price Basket for the Church, that that is highly competitive in the market.

149. *Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The report of findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013 *From Anecdote to Evidence* has a finding: "The strategy of grouping multiple churches together under one leader has in general had a detrimental effect on church growth. Multi-church amalgamations and teams are less likely to grow. Churches are more likely to grow when there is one leader for one community".

What evidence of church growth has the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board considered in relation to grant requests for grouping multiple parishes into a single larger parish?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board was created in February this year. To date, the Board has not received any grant requests for grouping multiple parishes into a single larger parish. Any funding proposal from a diocese or para-Church organisation is required to set out for the Board how their learning, and what God has blessed, informs the proposed programme of work. Dioceses are also learning from each other, for example staff are facilitating learning reviews in which dioceses which are in the process of developing funding proposals learn from other dioceses with experience in delivering similar programmes.

Mr Richard Denno: Thank you, Carl, for your answer about the issue of amalgamation of parishes into a single larger parish, and for pointing us to sharing and learning so that we can see what God is blessing or otherwise. Would the Archbishops' Council provide a shortlist of independent reviews, such as was done for *Transforming Wigan* in the Diocese of Liverpool this year, for all programmes that amalgamated parishes since 2013?

Mr Carl Hughes: That is a very good question. I think I will simply need to take that back to the Vision and Strategy team to ascertain how feasible that is. We are certainly intending, prospectively, to publish on the website all of the learnings from SDF and now SMMIB projects. Going back in time, how readily available that information might be I will need to check.

The Revd Mark Bennet (Oxford): The Church Growth Research Programme, *From Anecdote to Evidence*, is now over 10 years old. Has the Archbishops' Council given any thought to commissioning a refresher research programme on the same scale?

Mr Carl Hughes: I am not aware that we have given any consideration to that, but I am sure that that can be added to a future Archbishops' Council agenda.

150. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: How is progress being measured on the Archbishops' Council's objective of creating 10,000 new Christian communities across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital, and what progress has been made so far?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: This is an important question, and there are several elements to the answer:

- 1) There are about 700 new worshipping communities planned as part of projects and programmes awarded national Church funding since 2021.
- 2) We are encouraged by numbers of planned new communities reported in Diocesan Plans, and are working to collate these figures.
- 3) We anticipate more new worshipping communities will emerge in parishes and at a local level. There are some measurements of this in Statistics for Mission;
 - a) We recognise that it can be hard to discover all that is happening with small and emerging communities across these four areas;
 - b) We are introducing a one-off question in Statistics for Mission for 2023, asking churches to report their number of "new worshipping communities" (this builds on previous reporting of fresh expressions), and;
 - c) We are also working on an Outcome Framework which aims to provide a common definition of new worshipping communities. This will be rolled out for relevant projects in the SMMIB funded programmes in the coming months.

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): Of the 700 new worshipping communities, how many of them are lay-led or under the extended oversight of a priest or bishop?

The Bishop of Chester: Thank you, Matt, that is a very good question. I do not know the precise figures, but I am very happy to email them to you, assuming we can find them.

151. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: What consideration has the Archbishops' Council given to producing training materials for members of Bishops' Councils to enable better functioning of those councils? If they have not, what are the reasons for that?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: To date, there has been no demand from Bishops' Councils for a centralised training offer, and so there is no provision.

Mrs Amanda Robbie: Thank you for your answer that you have not been asked about training for Bishops' Councils. I have recently joined our Bishop's Council in Lichfield, and I am really interested to learn about how I could go about effective governance in my

role, but I have been given no training and not even a single piece of paper with a description of the role.

My question is, as Church school governors are given extensive training and expected to attend it, and there is a lamentable state of governance in the Church of England at the moment, can the Archbishops' Council please give consideration to providing some sort of training for members of Bishops, Councils?

The Bishop of Chester: Thank you, Amanda, and I rather like being asked the question early because it gives me a chance to think about the answer. There is a really important balance between national provision in the Church of England and a diocesan provision. At the moment, we do not see the appetite for national provision in this regard, but it is the diocese's responsibility to train Bishops' Council members. I am very happy to talk to the Presidents and, if that seems to be different, obviously we can provide something.

152. *Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: I am aware of a high vacancy rate in some dioceses, and a disparity of vacancy rates between dioceses. Please can you provide a list of actual parish vacancy rates and desired parish vacancy rates by diocese?

Mr Carl Hughes (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.

Mrs Amanda Robbie: Thank you, Carl, for answering my question, although I am sorry that it is not possible for the Archbishops' Council to collect the information that I requested. However, I do know that this question has been answered in several diocesan synods: Lichfield vacancy rate 20% in June this year, 25% in Lichfield ---

The Chair: Do you have a question?

Mrs Amanda Robbie: I do. My question is: since some diocesan synods are already collecting this information, would it be possible for a national collation of this information to be made available to people on this Synod so that we can have a picture of the national state of things?

Mr Carl Hughes: I can well understand the backdrop to your question; however, the issue that we face is just simply the pressure on staff teams for collating all of this data from across the Church. What I will do is, I will take away your request and reflect on it, because there might be an element of this that would be helpful also in the assessment of the number of ordinands who are coming through to training, and how that fits in with vacancy rates.

153. *The Revd Martin Poole (Chichester)* asked the Archbishops' Council: The Church Commissioners have allocated a £6 million fund to build diocesan capacity for work on

Net Zero Carbon, with £430,000 to enable £15,000 “starter grants” for each diocese, and the balance to fund larger grants. What is the progress on allocating this funding?

The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council: All dioceses have received a starter grant of £15,000.

Of the large grants, 14 grants covering 15 dioceses have already been approved, these included the first partnership grants to Exeter & Truro, and to the East of England cluster (5 dioceses).

10 applications covering 14 dioceses will be coming to the November Grants Panel for consideration, with the remaining 13 dioceses anticipated to apply to the December Grants Panel.

To date, £2.97 million of this fund has been allocated, including the starter grants, and the applications being considered in November add up to an additional £1.61 million. The funding is supporting dioceses to carry out energy audits across housing and the highest energy-using schools and churches, and also to recruit roles to support delivery of their NZC action plans, including programme and project managers, fundraising experts and engagement officers.

154. *The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle) asked the Archbishops’ Council:* What progress has been made on each of the milestones set out for funding options in section 5.4 on Page 52 of the Church of England *Route Map to Net Zero by 2030*?

The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council:

Milestones 5.4.3/5.4.4/5.4.7:

The Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Programme Board has been established and governance agreed with both Church Commissioners and Archbishops’ Council. This Board has now allocated the £30 million of Triennium 1 funding to support detailed project proposals and grants across the workstreams (Schools, Cathedrals and See houses, Churches, Clergy Housing, and TElS). Projects are now being initiated, with details on how dioceses and parishes can apply for support to be shared in the coming months as the various strands come on stream.

Milestones 5.4.1/5.4.2/5.4.8:

An initial study into the potential for funding decarbonisation activities from statutory, institutional and individual funders has been completed, and the NZC Programme and National Giving Team are exploring ways to increase capacity to engage with these. Alongside this, diocesan teams are being supported in developing funding bids for these audiences through a series of webinars over Q4 2023, and in-person workshops in Q1/2 2024. Discussions are ongoing with funders regarding the potential to leverage Church Commissioners investment in the NZC Programme through match funding.

Milestone 5.4.5/5.4.6:

An Expression of Interest on repayable lending for solar was issued in Summer 2023, with 25 responses. From this, discussions have been had with potential partners and a paper is being prepared for the January NZC Programme Board on options to take forward a selection of financing structures as a pilot. The intention is that these pilots would use grant funding to develop an implementation toolkit including template legal agreements for standard approaches.

155. *The Revd Aneal Appadoo (Co-opted)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Please make available to Synod the most recently available version of the Archbishops' Council's Conflict of Interest Policy.

156. *The Revd Aneal Appadoo (Co-opted)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Given the desire in the Church for transparency and good governance, and the stated desire of the Archbishops' Council to conform to this, please provide an explanation as to why the Archbishops' Council Conflict of Interest Policy is not currently publicly available on its website, unlike other charities (Oxfam, British Heart Foundation, National Trust, amongst others), and a timeline for when this apparent oversight will be corrected.

The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: With permission I will answer these two questions together.

The Archbishops' Council does not have a distinct conflicts of interest policy. We intend to develop such a policy which, subject to the agreement of the Council, could be made public before the next Synod.

Members of the Archbishops' Council, in line with good practice for charity trustees, maintain a register of their interests and where relevant new interests are declared at each meeting. This approach is also followed at meetings of Archbishops' Council committees.

The Revd Aneal Appadoo: Thank you for your answer to my question, I was grateful for the clarity. I would encourage the Council to agree to making this public before the next Synod as per your suggestion. However, in the absence of formal policy at present, I would be interested in knowing what guidance is currently given to trustees to assist them in ensuring they are following the Charity Commission requirements and best practice and on identifying and recording perceived or actual conflicts of interests in their current meetings?

The Revd Charlotte Cook: Thank you so much for your question. Thank you also for your interest. It is so, so important. While we do not have a current policy, we have a robust procedure, and I will see if we can send through details of that to you.

157. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the last group of sessions, I asked for some of the generic precedents used when drafting contracts in safeguarding cases. I note the supplementary answer that the contracts have been made available to Sarah Wilkinson who is leading the review of the ISB to determine what information should be made available. However, I explained last time that I was not asking for confidential information such as financial or personal data, but simply the generic precedents. I am deeply aware how long safeguarding reviews take in the Church of England, so I ask again, can the generic precedents, not confidential information, be shared with Synod now, rather than wait for confidential contracts to be reviewed as part of the review of the ISB?

The Revd Charlotte Cook (ex officio) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: We do not have any generic precedent contracts which apply across safeguarding matters generally because the range of work is so broad (for example, covering Learning Lessons case reviews, support with procurement, and data work in connection with the National Safeguarding Casework Management System). In circumstances where the contracts agree with contracts on the Archbishops' Council's terms, i.e. where the service provider does not wish to contract on their own terms, the contract is negotiated in light of the particular deliverables which are required in each case, and taking into account matters such as data processing.

The Chair: Members, I think for this item, we will stop here at question 157. Can I remind those who would like to, as we adjourn for lunch, that the weekly prayers for doubling the number of children and young people in the Church will be taking place at 1.00 pm here in the Assembly Hall, and if you are able to join they would really appreciate that. This item is now adjourned for lunch. Thank you.

Questions not reached during Synod.

158. *Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In 2020, the Second Estates Commissioner, Mr Andrew Selous, in Parliament said "the General Synod is the National Assembly of the Church of England, and it is a Church that is episcopally led and synodically governed. The General Synod is a devolved body of this Parliament. It is the first devolved body of the Westminster Parliament and has been since 1919"¹.

However, in answer to my question in July 2022 which stated "we are episcopally led and synodically governed", the Archbishop of Canterbury said "we are not episcopally led and synodically governed. This is a myth and it always has been a myth. That is completely what we are not."²

At the July 2023 General Synod, during the presentation of GS 2307³, National Church Governance Report and Recommendations from the National Church Governance Project Board, Sir David Lidington cited GS MISC 1319 saying there is: "A confusing lack of clarity over who is responsible for decisions";

“Some governance bodies failing to realise they had a duty to take decisions under charity law to take decisions under a particular policy area”;

“Others were asserting their right to take decisions without any legal authority”;

“Scrutiny by the Synod not working well leading to deep dissatisfaction and frustration among members”;

“a lack of transparency”.

Sir David further said, as Chair of the Governance review, that:

⁴ “members of Synod could use their existing powers to better effect than hitherto and, indeed, [we] were surprised to hear from some Synod members they did not know about the powers available”.

Bearing in mind the above comments, as Presidents of the General Synod, will the Archbishops please write (and publish the response) to His Majesty's Government to ask for:

- confirmation of whose position on this matter is correct constitutionally and, in respect of powers given to us by Parliament, who Synod acts *in loco*;
- to outline the powers and undertakings expected by members of General Synod and from the General Synod?

1. *Hansard: Coronavirus Bill - Volume 674: Debated on Monday 23 March 2020*

2. *Record of proceedings July 2022*

3. <https://www.youtube.com/live/kq-h-0JvsjQ?si=ZQjtLyN0f5yepszO&t=769>

4. <https://www.youtube.com/live/kq-h-0JvsjQ?si=zKL793OPmhKjIRxM&t=1190>

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 legal structure of the governance of the Church of England is helpfully set out in paper GS Misc 910, including a discussion of the question of whether the Church of England is indeed “episcopally led and synodically governed”, and accordingly I see no requirement to seek a view from the Government on this point.

GS Misc 910 is available under the members' resources section of the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/gs-misc-910.pdf>

The functions of the General Synod are set out in the Synodical Government Measure 1969, schedule 2 paragraph 6 and elsewhere in the Measure.

159. *The Ven. Canon Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:* Please could you provide Synod with an update on the Independent Review to be set up in response to a complaint by Dr Martyn Percy, following up from the answers given to Qs 40 & 41 at July '23 Synod? Please could the update cover the consultation happening prior to the Review, when a Reviewer is likely to be appointed and the Terms of Reference and timescale for the Review?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Joint

President of the Archbishops' Council : Thank you for your question. On 2 November, details of the review group were announced alongside an outline of the work they are due to carry out, including the appointment of an Independent Reviewer. [Christ Church Review Group announced | The Church of England](#). The terms of reference are currently being finalised. The report is expected to be completed and published in the summer of 2024. If anyone would like to be in contact with the review group, please contact: christchurchreview@churchofengland.org

160. *The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: When Synod next meets, the reviews of Professor Jay into the new form of ISB and the ISB dismissals, currently being conducted by Sarah Wilkinson, should be published.

Will the Presidents assure Synod that it will be given substantial time in February to consider these important Reports, to hold power to account, and to reflect upon how they impact upon the growing list of unresolved survivor complaints including those of Gilo, Matt Ineson, Adrian, Mr X of the Spindler Report and Dr Martyn Percy, and the 11 survivors whose promised reviews were curtailed by the ISB sackings?

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 shape of the agenda for the February Group of Sessions is a matter for the Business Committee, but I can assure you I have heard your point and will be happy to recommend to the Business Committee that time is allocated to discuss these important matters relating to the future of safeguarding in the Church and lessons learnt on the Independent Safeguarding Board.

The General Synod should always be careful in how it speaks publicly about individual cases to make sure it is not increasing the trauma for survivors nor prejudging independent processes that have not yet concluded.

161. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: In the light of the contrast between the Archbishops' Council press release welcoming Professor Alexis Jay's work to develop proposals for independent scrutiny of safeguarding, and Professor Jay's own press release saying that she has been asked to lead work to recommend a model for fully independent safeguarding; precisely what brief was given to Professor Jay: a) by the Archbishops' Council and b) if different, by either or both of the Archbishops?

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 Future of Church Safeguarding website states:

"Professor Jay was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York in July 2023 to independently:

- provide options and recommendations for how a new independent safeguarding and scrutiny body for the Church of England might be formed and how it should operate;
- make any recommendations for how further independence of safeguarding for the Church of England might be achieved; and
- make any other recommendations that are necessary or appropriate.

The programme is focused on a number of key issues relating to independent safeguarding arrangements including: Independence; fairness; and impartiality.”

Professor Jay will be publishing her report by the end of the year and I, like many of you, look forward to reading her thoughts and recommendations.

162. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: On the 23 June 2023, writing on behalf of his client Gilo, Solicitor and IICSA Advocate for Survivors, Richard Scorer, wrote to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York raising specific concerns about a historic dismissal of complaint against the Secretary General asking questions, and referencing new documentary evidence from a third party source.

On 18 October 2023, Mr Scorer wrote to Professor Alexis Jay enclosing a copy of the unanswered letter stating “Since I sent this letter in July I have been repeatedly promised by the personal private secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the letter is receiving the Archbishop’s attention and that a substantive reply will be sent. However, nearly four months later, no substantive reply has been received. I chased again today”.

Will the Archbishops undertake to respond fully to Mr Scorer forthwith explaining why there has been such a lengthy delay, and will they deliver a copy of that reply to Professor Jay?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as *Joint President of the Archbishops' Council*: Thank you for your question. Whilst neither myself nor the Archbishop of Canterbury are obliged to do so, we have asked external auditors to undertake a targeted review of the matters raised, prior to providing a substantive response. This work will begin shortly, and we hope it will be completed as soon as possible. We will shortly provide an update to Mr Scorer.

163. *Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby)* asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Does the Archbishops’ Council maintain a register of reputational risks to the Church which have been identified and, if so, who is responsible for maintaining it and identifying variations in its levels of sensitivity and acuteness?

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The Archbishops’ Council maintains a strategic risk register, as part of which reputational risks to the Church are considered. The Archbishops’ Council senior leadership team is responsible for maintaining the strategic risk register with support from the NCIs’ Risk and Assurance Department. The Archbishops’ Council Audit

Committee consider and approve the Archbishops' Council strategic risk register bi-annually.

164. *Mr Simon Friend (Exeter) asked the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: Were there any answers advanced for and on behalf of Archbishops' Council in respect of safeguarding, either at the formal Question and Answer Sessions or during the debates on Safeguarding at the July York 2023 session, which, in retrospect and upon reflection, the Council would wish to correct?*

Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells) replied on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council: The answers given at the July York Synod on safeguarding, and comments made in debates, were done in good faith based on information available at the time and in the knowledge that these matters remain extremely sensitive. The Council is of course open to correction or challenge if, for example, new facts come to light through Sarah Wilkinson's review of the events leading up to the termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

165. *Mrs Michaela Suckling (Sheffield) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Will the House of Bishops raise concerns with Ministers about the severity of the current sanctions regime and its impact on the usage of food banks, as argued by the Joint Public Issues team in its 2015 report on the subject?*

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The simple answer is, yes. We do our best, whenever we have the opportunity, in particular to share our local experience of how the benefit sanctions regime works in practice, and not only in terms of the impact on food banks, crucial though that link is.

166. *Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the first of the 6 Bold outcomes, namely to "double the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030", what can and will the House of Bishops do to develop Confirmation Services as important opportunities of Christian gathering to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit and to celebrate and encourage active discipleship, especially amongst teenagers?*

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Bishops seek to use Confirmations positively as a key occasion in the discipleship journey not only for the confirmands but also for all gathered at these events. Many bishops offer an opportunity for a response to Jesus in the service for those attending. They have even discovered that some of those being confirmed the following year were those who made such a response.

Bishops share good practice around confirmations so that we can learn from each other

and ensure we make the most of such a key movement in the life of young people. Clearly excellent preparation in local parishes and schools is important, as is continuing discipleship following the confirmation itself.

167. *Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* It is now over a year since the final IICSA report was delivered to Government. Although the Church of England has begun to address its recommendations in relation to the Church, there has been no governmental response, despite the Inquiry having spent many years and much public money investigating this important issue. What actions have the House of Bishops taken to ensure child protection receives appropriate governmental priority?

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Government commenced a consultation on IICSA recommendation 13, Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse, in May 2023. In consultation with Diocesan and Cathedral Safeguarding Officers, the National Safeguarding Team did submit a response to the call for evidence and will continue to take part in any government-led consultations on the IICSA recommendations.

The House of Bishops values the work of IICSA. The Church of England is working hard to implement the recommendations made by IICSA and directed specifically at us. We would encourage the Government to address IICSA's other recommendations with equal seriousness.

168. *The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* When an ordained minister in the Church of England finds themselves no longer able to uphold their ordination declaration to believe, expound and teach "the doctrine of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it", procedurally and with integrity, what should they do, and how will the Church facilitate the appropriate action and fulfil its duty of care to them?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: All clergy in the Church of England are required to uphold their ordination declaration to believe, expound and teach "the doctrine of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it". In the event that someone finds that they are no longer able to fulfil this commitment, then they should approach their Bishop who would deal with it appropriately.

169. *The Revd Alice Kemp (Bristol) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* Canon C 4.3 (Of the quality of such as are to be ordained deacons or priests) states: "No person shall be admitted into holy orders who is suffering, or who has suffered, from any physical or mental infirmity which in the opinion of the bishop will prevent him from ministering the word and sacraments or from performing the other duties of the minister's office".

This Canon offers no route of appeal or protection against what may be an ill-informed view held by a bishop with no relevant experience of disability matters.

Given that Synod has voted unanimously to “commit to working towards the removal of all remaining barriers to full participation for disabled people in the life and ministry of the church” (GS 2270, July 2022), when does the House of Bishops intend to remove or amend this discriminatory Canon so that disabled people with a vocation to ministry are no longer subject to the unilateral and unaccountable decisions of individual bishops?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The House of Bishops is committed to enabling those with disabilities to access the discernment process and training for ordained ministry, and there are many clergy with disabilities who exercise an effective and fruitful ministry. With regard to this Canon, the Legal Office have advised that Canon C 4.3 should be interpreted in a way that does not result in candidates who are disabled being automatically excluded. Canon C 4.3 would exclude a person from ordination only if that person was not able to do things essential for a priest or deacon to do. The facts of each case have to be considered, including what, if any, reasonable adjustments can be made.

170. *Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Routemap to Net Zero* milestone 4.5.5. on Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) is for all TEIs to be registered with Eco Church and have achieved at least bronze by the end of 2024. How are we progressing on this?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is much commitment to the environment by ordinands and TEI staff. Examples include:

Lindisfarne College and Ripon College have achieved Silver Eco Church award.

St Hild (which includes Mirfield College of the Resurrection and Lincoln School of Theology) has achieved bronze award.

Ridley Hall has achieved silver for its college chapel.

One of the challenges is that colleges are being asked to submit for the Eco Church award which does not really fit their community life. Criteria for a specific Eco College award were written over the summer. They are currently with À Rocha UK for their trustees to agree, and then the Eco College award can be piloted in early 2024. This should help us reach the milestone of all colleges with a bronze award by the end of 2024.

171. *The Revd Canon Kate Massey (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How are the Transformations Steering Group and Transformations Research and Implementation Group being resourced to investigate identified problems faced by women clergy?

172. *The Revd Canon Kate Massey (Coventry)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the mechanism whereby the concerns raised at the Transformations Steering Group can be heard more widely and agreed courses of action progressed?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I will answer both of Canon Massey's questions together.

The Transformations Steering Group and Transformations Research and Implementation Group do not receive any direct financial support, but staff from the Ministry Development Team support their work. This provides a direct link for concerns to be forwarded to Ministry Council, which is a committee of Archbishops' Council.

173. *Mrs Ruth Abernethy (Channel Islands)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What work (if any) has been done in order to effect extending the Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 and thus prevent its falling into abeyance in March 2025?

174. *The Revd Lis Goddard (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What work (if any) has been done in order to effect extending the Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 and thus prevent its falling into abeyance in March 2025?

The Bishop of St Albans (The Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission I will answer Questions 173 and 174 together.

The Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 was introduced following consultation between Government and the Church in the period that followed General Synod and Parliament passing legislation to enable women to be consecrated as bishops. It remains in effect until 18th May 2025. The Act was warmly welcomed in Parliament, and its impact and operation has been kept under periodic review by the Lords Spiritual Convenor and the Church's Parliamentary Office. To date, six women have entered the House of Lords under its terms.

The House of Bishops discussed the Act at their most recent meeting and resolved to initiate discussions with Government on possibly extending it for a further period, whilst also exploring other ways to ensure a more equal representation of women among the Lords Spiritual.

175. *Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: As revealed in the recent *State of Nature* report, we are at a critical juncture with loss of habitats and species decline. What can our dioceses be doing in this area, and what national resources are available to dioceses?

The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Eco Church and Eco Diocese framework is an excellent resource for parishes and dioceses. The section on land enables Church communities and dioceses to engage in caring for their environment and take action, putting in place robust policies and land management plans with biodiversity at the centre.

There is also recent guidance about enhancing biodiversity on glebe land, which can be found here, alongside a host of other guidance:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/land-and-nature>

The Environment Programme is also working in partnership with Caring for God's Acre, who have many resources here: <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

176. *The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The *Routemap to Net Zero* milestone 4.2.9 on Eco Church is for 10% of local churches in every diocese to be registered and 5% of local churches awarded at least bronze (Bronze Eco Diocese standard) by the end of 2023. How are we progressing on this?

The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Overall, we have reached the target of 10% of churches registered for Eco Church and 5% of churches reaching at least bronze award.

Broken down by diocese, only one diocese has not yet reached this threshold. New churches are being registered all the time, and the data is changing rapidly. Two dioceses have reached the threshold in the last few days.

Twenty-two out of 42 dioceses have achieved the full bronze Eco Diocese awards, with 4 more aiming to be there very soon. See:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/denominational-awards/eco-diocese/>

We expect this engagement to increase, and the Net Zero Carbon Programme is providing funding to support this; a partnership grant to À Rocha UK has funded the appointment of an Eco Diocese Officer to support dioceses with their applications and advise on meeting the criteria. The Net Zero Carbon Capacity Building Grants are enabling additional diocesan roles which can support and encourage engagement with Eco Church.

177. *Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What support is available for dioceses working towards À Rocha Eco Diocese awards?

The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: À Rocha UK's appointment of an Eco Diocese Officer will help support dioceses with their applications and advise about meeting the criteria. This new role has been enabled by the partnership grant awarded to À Rocha UK from the 2023-2025 Net Zero Carbon Programme triennium funding.

There is recognition of the different circumstances of individual dioceses, and it is good to note that there is much sharing of good practice via the many committed individuals involved with Eco Diocese and Eco Church across the Church of England and ecumenically.

The Net Zero Carbon Capacity Building Grants being made available to dioceses are also enabling additional diocesan roles which can support and encourage engagement with Eco Church.

178. *Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Is the Church of England Net Zero Carbon Programme providing, or considering providing, some straightforward “calculators” on their webpages which would enable churches to explore the potential likely costs and benefits of installing different renewable energy systems at the start of their decision making, and before it becomes necessary to incur any expenditure on consultants - such as for churches considering the installation of solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels on a suitable roof, where, by inserting, for example, the dimensions and area of the roof into an online “calculator”, the user would be provided with a series of general estimates and useful information, such as:

- a) an indication of the potential number of solar panels required for the roof;
- b) a likely cost range for purchasing the panels and their installation;
- c) an estimate of the potential amount of electricity that could be generated for the roof area; and
- d) the likely value to the church of the electricity generated, both for use within the church or church building and the value if exported to the National Grid;

to help inform their early decision making?

The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: There are a number of online calculators already available, but these are typically oriented towards the residential sector. To develop reasonably accurate calculators for our churches, church halls and schools would take time and money. Given how varied our church buildings are in size and construction methods, there will be a limit as to how accurate such calculators can be.

A better approach is for Church communities to follow the steps outlined in the Practical Path to Net Zero ([The practical path to net zero carbon for churches | The Church of England](#)) in the first instance, as this should yield immediate energy savings, and then to undertake an energy audit of their building, as this is relatively inexpensive.

The Net Zero Programme is working with Parish Buying to provide fully funded energy audits for 600 of the highest emitting church buildings, and partially funded audits for a further 1,000 church buildings. It is expected that eligible PCCs will be able to apply for this support from January 2024. The Energy Footprint tool returns are a key dataset for the Net Zero Programme, and having accurate information about every church building is important to assess our progress. The tool provides Church communities with basic information about their energy usage, and we are exploring how the tool can be improved to help assess net zero options.

179. *Canon Peter Adams (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: I'm sure I express the gratitude of all of Synod for the pastoral concern expressed to Christians in

the Holy Land at this time by the Archbishop's recent visit. As the House of Bishops will know, the conflict is doing huge harm to interfaith relations, and more widely community relations around the nation, and especially at the grassroots. Hate crimes have escalated, and community tensions have increased. Would the House advise Synod on how they and their advisors are responding to this challenge?

The Bishop of Southwark (The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is indeed troubling to see the impact of the conflict in the Holy Land on community relations here in the UK and the rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia that has ensued. Bishops across the Church of England, especially in some of our diverse cities, have participated in and helped facilitate important statements of solidarity in order to diffuse tensions and keep friendships intact. In the city of Bradford, for example, there was a significant united call from the Council of Faiths urging that the conflict in the Middle East does not undermine the good work of community relations here. A similar statement was issued by faith leaders in Birmingham with the support of the Bishop of Aston. Archbishop Justin stood with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra as they each condemned antisemitism and Islamophobia in the week following October 7th. Diocesan Inter Faith Advisors recently had a special online meeting sharing examples of good practice for the shoring up of community cohesion, and there have been a number of behind-closed-doors gatherings where Church of England clergy and lay leaders hosted, or have been in private conversation with, Jewish and Muslim leaders to hold space for difficult conversations.

180. *Mr Benjamin John (St Albans) asked the Chair of the House of Bishops:* The Archbishop of Canterbury in response to written question Q102 in the July 2023 Group of Sessions wrote that *"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.'"*

This was in response to a question trying to clarify what bishops actually need to believe and uphold.

The Preface to the Marriage Service, that is, in the historic formularies which we are told witnesses to Christian truth, teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman and the Thirty-nine Articles were "Agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562 for the avoiding of diversities of opinions".

Given ongoing dissent by some bishops on the doctrine of marriage, which seems to

contradict the Archbishop's previous answer, and the apparent toleration of "diversities of opinions", what do bishops actually have to believe?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: I refer to the answer I gave last time with the emphasis that the faith is proclaimed "afresh in each generation" and is "Led by the Holy Spirit".

181. *Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What is the expectation placed on members of the House of Bishops regarding the exercise of collective responsibility for decisions made by the House?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Bishops are required to comply with Canon Law, and their Ordination Oaths and Declarations. When meeting as a House of the General Synod, Bishops are operating under Standing Orders. Debates and discussions are conducted with a strong ethos of personal and collegial support. Although there is no requirement of collective responsibility of the kind required in Government, and often expected of trustee bodies, there is an expectation of courtesy and appropriate confidentiality.

182. *Mr Philip Baldwin (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Could the Archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops, give a World AIDS Day message on World AIDS Day 2023?

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Having consulted with the Anglican Communion Office and the Anglican Alliance, I can confirm I will be giving a World AIDS Day message for 2023.

183. *Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When either diocesan or suffragan episcopal appointments are made, is it still expected that the bishop(s) will uphold, teach and expound the doctrine of the Church, and how is this expectation made clear during the discernment and appointment processes?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Each person consecrated to the order of Bishops is asked the following question during the ordination service: "Will you teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it, will you refute error, and will you hand on entire the faith that is entrusted to you?" The ordinand responds, "By the help of God, I will". In addition, and in common with all those clergy licensed to an office, bishops too make the Declaration of Assent, which is a public affirmation of their belief in the "faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness". The discernment process for episcopal appointments pays great emphasis to these matters of doctrine and belief, particularly exploring how they will help the Church proclaim it afresh in each generation.

184. *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: How will the work towards a national housing strategy being led by the Bishop of Chelmsford take into account the research evidence that marriage (contrasted with cohabitation) leads to more stable relationships, which in turn has a positive impact on the use and availability of housing stock?

The Bishop of Chelmsford (The Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is a sad reality that one of the drivers of housing demand is the breakdown of marriages and couple relationships, because one family then needs two houses, which renders them economically and relationally poorer. Therefore the wider work of the Church, in as much as it seeks to strengthen family life and hold out the ideal of stable, committed marriage, can go some way towards easing the housing crisis.

Our national housing strategy work seeks to respond to the needs of households of varying sizes and formations, by ensuring there is sufficient decent, affordable housing for them all. This is especially important because high housing cost and lack of available homes to rent can put immense strain on family relationships.

The Housing Initiative is only one part of the Church's wider mission to support the lives of people in all their diverse circumstances, and the promotion of marriage, with its whole range of social and personal goods, is the task of the whole Church. The question nicely demonstrates how the Church's mission is holistic and inter-dependent, despite the fact that discrete programmes may be needed to deliver it.

185. *Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: The Makin Review into abuse by John Smyth QC is now over 1,250 days overdue. In view of the excessive length of time this is taking, and the effect on survivors and victims, can you confirm how many days per week Keith Makin is currently contractually obliged to work on the Review?

The Bishop of Stepney (Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Because of the complexity of the Makin Review, it has taken longer than anticipated to conclude this review. The review is dealing with sensitive and extensive material. It is important that its conclusions are robust, and that due process is followed. There have been some unforeseen difficulties, and new material has come to light as the review has progressed.

The contract with Keith Makin is to deliver a service in line with the terms of reference for the review. It does not specify the number of days the Reviewer should work. This reflects the fact that the work required may change from week to week depending on the stage of the report.

The resourcing for this review has been reviewed and additional support to the lead Reviewer has been provided.

186. *Canon Shayne Ardron (Leicester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Do we know roughly the proportion or number of people who have been helped by us having safeguarding teams in the dioceses? Sadly there is abuse all over, and I have found doing the safeguarding course has been useful in a church context with regard to supporting people coping with abuse within their families and not related to church. I know others who have personally been helped by doing the safeguarding courses then been able to address long held abuse, with help from the Diocesan safeguarding team. Is there any way we can capture these positive changes?

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Unfortunately, the current data collection systems do not capture all the positive safeguarding work that is being conducted in dioceses and cathedrals to keep people safe and respond well when abuse is identified.

The Parish Dashboard, to which 6,600 parishes have signed up, does capture some of the key safeguarding requirements of a parish, as outlined in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook. The Parish Dashboard is being developed further to measure the implementation of the new Safeguarding Standards.

The Safeguarding audits, a new round of which will start in 2024, and the implementation of the National Safeguarding Management System, will enhance our ability to capture positive outcomes and change.

187. *Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Whose consent is required for immunities from the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) process to be offered to potential respondents by the National Safeguarding Team (NST), and under whose formal legal authority are the terms of such immunities advanced?

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The NST do not have any legal authority to offer immunity from proceedings under the CDM. The circumstances surrounding any allegation of serious misconduct will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

188. *The Revd Robert Thompson (London)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is an established precedent for a Director of the NST having *locus standi* (legal status) to initiate proceedings under the Clergy Discipline Measure against a diocesan bishop in a safeguarding context; can you confirm if the discretion to exercise that power lies exclusively with the Director and, if not, explain who makes or contributes towards making the final decision?

189. *The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: There is an established precedent for a Director of the NST having *locus standi* (legal status) to initiate proceedings under the Clergy Discipline Measure against a Diocesan

Bishop in a safeguarding context; can you confirm if the discretion to exercise that power lies exclusively with the Director, and, if not, outline the process by which such decisions come to be made?

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: With permission, I will answer Questions 188 and 189 together.

Proceedings under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 may be instituted by any person who has a “proper interest” in making the complaint. There are cases where the Director of Safeguarding and senior caseworkers in the National Safeguarding Team have instituted proceedings against clergy, including bishops, and it has been accepted in those cases that they had a “proper interest” enabling them to do so. All the relevant decisions are taken by staff at the appropriate level in the National Safeguarding Team. That level varies according to the nature and facts of the case.

190. *Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: When including disputed “spiritual abuse” language and definitions in Church of England safeguarding literature, what account was taken of the recommendation of Lord Clyde, following the Orkney child “satanic” abuse inquiry, that terms should not be used “without a common understanding of the definition and purpose of the label” (1992, p. 269)?

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The definition of “spiritual abuse” was agreed by the House of Bishops in December 2021 ([2. Definitions | The Church of England](#)). This followed the development of the definition and full guidance over several years by a working group involving survivors of such abuse, and extensive consultation with Church safeguarding professionals and clergy. The definition has an evidenced academic background, which has also been adopted by, for example, the Methodist Church, and its aim was to bring a common understanding of an abuse already being reported. A comprehensive training programme has also been delivered on Spiritual Abuse.

191. *The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: At last July's Synod, GS 2295 spoke of a “Learning Loop” by which the drawing out of themes from independent Lessons Learned Reviews (LLRs), now to be called Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SPRs), on catastrophic safeguarding failures are incorporated into policy and training:

On a wider scale, the NST will have a role in reviewing the themes that are emerging from all the Reviews carried out. This will feed back into the NST's planning cycle for learning and development, thus closing the learning loop. Linking the recommendations to the Safeguarding Standards also allows for them to be included in any further external audits, again ensuring that the learning is captured and implemented (GS 2295).

The report from the National Safeguarding Team (GS Misc 1358) for this Synod reports under Safeguarding Learning “This revision to the Framework will not introduce

widespread changes but rather seeks to maintain the excellent progress which has been made to date within safeguarding learning” (5.1). Given the number of LLRs, e.g. Gibb on Ball (2017), Robson on Griffin (2022), Cooper on Stowe and Maids Moreton (2022), as well as multiple references in IICSA hearings (2018-2019), which explicitly draw out a theme between discriminatory policies and attitudes towards LGBT+ people as a significant factor in catastrophic safeguarding failures, may Synod know how the “Learning Loop” works to ensure “that the learning is captured and implemented” in regards to this significant and recurring theme from a number of independent Reviewers as well as IICSA?

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: Recommendations from Learning Lesson Reviews, now Safeguarding Practice Reviews, are collated by the NST.

Dioceses and cathedrals are responsible for the implementation of local recommendations, which should be monitored through local governance processes.

The NST looks at the national implications of local reviews, and shares with the relevant departments to ensure that this learning is incorporated into future policy and practice.

The Lead Bishop for Safeguarding, and NST colleagues involved with learning and development, are keen to develop thinking around the issues raised by this question in relation to LLF, and to receive any further thoughts on necessary learning.

192. *The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In order to promote greater transparency and cohesion between the three Houses of General Synod, will the House of Bishops initiate a review into its current procedures for the publication of agendas and minutes, and the use of Standing Order 14?

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: Thank you for your question. It is important that bishops have a space where they can discuss and discern matters of episcopal ministry privately to encourage open and honest dialogue. If discussions were fully accessible and broadcast on social media this would inhibit the sort of honest discussion needed.

193. *Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Please provide a complete list, by name and current role within the life of the Church of England, of those bishops who were invited, or attended, the most recent College of Bishops meeting and were not at the time serving as diocesan or suffragan bishops.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell) replied as Chair of the House of Bishops: At the most recent College of Bishops residential in September 2023, the following bishops, who were not at the time serving as diocesan or suffragan bishops, attended or gave apologies:

Attended:

The Rt Revd Jan McFarlane, Residentiary Canon (House for Duty) at Lichfield Cathedral and Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Lichfield

The Rt Revd Mark Rylands, Rector, Ashburton and Moorland Team Ministry and Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Exeter

The Rt Revd Humphrey Southern, Principal of Cuddesdon

The Rt Revd Rob Wickham, CEO, Church Urban Fund

The Rt Revd Jo Bailey Wells, Bishop for Episcopal Ministry in the Anglican Communion

Apologies:

The Rt Revd Mark Sowerby, Principal, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield

The Rt Revd Nicholas Dill, Bishop of Bermuda

The Rt Revd Graham Tomlin, Director, Centre for Cultural Witness

Note:

The Rt Revd David Urquhart, Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, attended in his capacity as Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

194. *Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that Alpha has reached 169 countries in 112 languages, and over half a million prisoners have completed Christianity Explored in 36 countries, on this basis, would the continued use of these effective tools be commended for achieving our strategic priorities?

The Bishop of Gloucester (The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: We certainly need to develop diverse mission strategies if we are to reach the world in which God has placed us with the Good News of Jesus. The use of evangelistic courses is a key part of this God-given task, and courses such as Alpha, Christianity Explored and others, including Start, Table Talk and Essence and Pilgrim, are great resources for the Church, as well as the bespoke courses which many local churches create.

195. *Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given the Bishop of Dover's comments at the last Synod reflecting "... the women bishops thing ain't working", what work has the College of Bishops recently undertaken towards the outworking of the Five Guiding Principles and how they might support each other in fostering a consistent and generous approach to the original agreement and the rationale behind its existence?

The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The College of Bishops will spend time at its meeting in January to consider a number of related topics under the banner of Generous Ecclesiology. This will include a session with the episcopal members of House of Bishops' Standing Commission on the House of Bishops Declaration and Five Guiding Principles, during which bishops will have the opportunity to discuss how this Commission can support the College and House of Bishops with the working out of the Declaration. The Standing Commission continues to meet and discuss these matters on a regular basis as a committee of the House of Bishops.

196. *The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: In the July group of sessions this year, the Bishop of Dover expressed a strong view that the Five Guiding Principles are “not working” and are “discriminatory”. May I ask how many, and who, among the bishops agree with her? And would they support a motion to rescind them were such a motion tabled?

The Bishop of Newcastle (The Rt Revd Helen-Ann Hartley) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: It is not known how many members of the House of Bishops agree with the remarks made by the Bishop of Dover during the July group of sessions this year. Neither is it known whether there are members of the House of Bishops who would support an amendment to the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests. A motion in the House of Bishops for the amendment of the Declaration is not deemed to have been carried unless a draft proposed amendment has been approved by a majority of two-thirds of each House of the General Synod present and voting (see SO 10A of the Standing Orders of the House of Bishops). Any draft motion to this effect would need to be initiated by the House of Bishops.

197. *Mr Charles Houston (Hereford)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: Given that it is mandatory for PCCs to include safeguarding on the agenda for each PCC meeting, is the absence of mission as an obligatory agenda item an indication of the Church's priorities or just an oversight? If the latter, can this be rectified?

The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: The functions of a Parochial Church Council (PCC) include “co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical” (Parochial Church Councils (Powers Measure) 1956). Most aspects of a PCC’s activity should therefore be directed towards mission. The Church Representation Rules do not prescribe the business which must be included on a PCC's agenda. Statutory guidance on Safeguarding contained in *Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance* (2017) mandates the inclusion of safeguarding on PCC agendas. Any requirement to include mission as a standing agenda item for PCC meetings would require legislation to amend the Church Representation Rules. However, nearly all of a PCC's business should come within this category and it is not therefore clear how useful it would be as a single obligatory agenda item.

198. *Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester)* asked the Chair of the House of Bishops: What consideration has the House of Bishops given to the Government proposals for a ban on so-called “conversion therapy”?

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE) replied on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops: A formal Church of England response to the Government's consultation on a ban on conversion therapy was submitted.

In addition, in 2022, the LLF Next Steps group asked the Faith and Order Commission to lead a collaborative piece of work around questions raised by conversion therapy. A group was drawn together, including Faith And Order Commission members, a safeguarding professional, and experienced Church leaders from a variety of Church traditions and lived experience. The group consulted with a number of additional LGBTQI+ people for feedback on material.

The group has produced two documents. The first is a briefing on conversion therapy. The second is a wider document which explores underlying principles for good practice in praying for one another. At its meeting on 31 October, the House of Bishops has agreed that both documents should become public subject to some minor changes.

SECRETARY GENERAL

199. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Secretary General: What steps have been taken by the NCIs to ensure accessibility to their online presence by those whose sensory perception (vision, hearing) is limited in some way?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: We aim to follow industry accessibility standards across the Church of England's national digital platforms. The digital team commissions audits and responds to user feedback where possible to ensure our content and resources are accessible.

The Church of England is working to follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard across national websites, such as churchofengland.org and AChurchNearYou.com. Any current non-compliances will be addressed by upcoming development work.

To ensure our social media content can be engaged with by as many followers as possible, all images have Alt text, all videos are manually subtitled, and our national online services have British Sign Language in-vision. In October, we saw our first service conducted entirely in BSL.

These national online services, which began during the pandemic, are still being well received by a large number of followers who are not attending their local church, some due to accessibility requirements. Each service is seen on average 150,000 times.

We also help local churches to consider the accessibility of their digital content through our Digital Labs training and by promoting accessibility features both online and in person on AChurchNearYou.com.

200. *The Revd Alice Kemp (Bristol)* asked the Secretary General: There have been a number of instances recently when documents have been sent out from the NCIs, or used in training, that do not meet standard accessibility guidelines. For example the Church of

England website says that “Any new PDFs or Word documents we publish will meet accessibility standards”. However, the new National Safeguarding “Our Parish...” documents do not meet accessibility guidance. In addition PowerPoints used in training frequently do not meet guidance for accessibility. Could enhanced accessibility guidance for training materials be created to sit alongside the current Accessibility Statement for the website? Could the NCIs commit to ensuring that all staff follow these guidelines in all communications and published materials? The Business Committee Statement of Accessibility includes some basic guidance on font size. The national Government also produces guidance on publishing accessible documents for public bodies.

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: Thank you for your question, with which I have a lot of sympathy. I recognise that materials produced by the national Church institutions have not always followed the standards that we set for the material we put on the Church of England website. Updated accessibility guidance will be issued for Word documents, PDFs and PowerPoints in the coming months.

Thank you for raising the issue of the “Our Parish” documents, which I am assured is already being addressed.

Further training will be made available for NCI staff and work to ensure accessibility guidelines are followed across the Church of England website will be carried out.

201. *Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester)* asked the Secretary General: At the July 2023 Question and Answer sessions of the General Synod, by Questions 27 & 28, answered on behalf of the Presidents of Archbishops’ Council by Archbishops’ Council member Dr Jamie Harrison, confirmation was sought that all relevant correspondence of safeguarding importance between diocesan bishops had been forwarded to the Makin Review and that “no information of safeguarding importance has been excluded as a result of falling outside the Makin Review’s terms of reference”.

Will you now place on the record of Synod confirmation that a communication dated 13 October 2021, meeting those criteria of potential relevance, which had been in the possession of Church House shortly after being written, was not sent to the investigating Reviewer until days after the questions were tabled, and answered in July 2023?

Mr William Nye replied as Secretary General: This is a question about a safeguarding casework matter. By convention, questions of this kind are transferred to the House of Bishops for the lead bishop on safeguarding to reply to. However, as the questioner has objected to this normal practice, in this case I am content to provide the following answer which the lead bishop would have given and has approved:

In September 2021, the NST started a safeguarding investigation linked to the content of both the emails referred to. The investigation by the casework team included communicating with the Reviewer on the issues raised in the emails, tracing potential witnesses and seeking corroborating information.

In the first email, the author of the email clearly states that the confidential attachment had been provided to the Reviewer by the joint owner of the confidential report.

For completeness, the emails were sent in their entirety to the Makin Review on 13th July 2023.

CLERK TO THE SYNOD

202. *The Revd Amatu Christian-Iwuagwu (London)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Please state which software is used for the storing of formal Synod information such as members' personal details, and how access to this information is protected under the required data protection laws.

Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod: The information received from members through the registration form is stored in a highly secure database system that is password protected and requires two-factor authentication for all its users. Users have to request permission from one central administrator to gain access, and access is only granted to users with clear reason for that access. Within the database, personal data relating to Synod members is locked down so it is only viewable by Synod staff who have the direct permissions to see that data. The system is compliant with GDPR policies and procedures, and also complies with internal NCI policies.

203. *Mr John Brydon (Norwich)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: Please advise who specifically has access to the text of Synod questions submitted and the proposed answers in advance of Synod members receiving them.

Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod: The questions administrator, legal adviser and Clerk have access to the questions as they are received into the Questions mailbox. This mailbox is only accessible to these members of staff.

Once the deadline for submitting questions has passed, the questions are allocated to the appropriate body and each question is sent to the individual responding to the question. The question is copied to any relevant member of staff who can help provide information on the answer.

Staff of the Central Secretariat receive the proposed answers once they are drafted and they are then collated to put into the Questions Notice Paper.

204. *The Ven. Canon Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Clerk to the Synod: In Synod at York on Sunday afternoon, 9 July 2023, and following a number of points of order, the session on Item 11, "Presentation on developments relating to the Independent Safeguarding Board", was suspended for about 15 minutes to enable Synod members to hear speeches from former ISB members Jasvinder Sanghera and Steve Reeves in response to a presentation by four members of the Archbishops' Council on

those developments, including the decision of the Council to terminate the contracts of the Board's members. In adjourning the sitting, the Chair (the Revd Zoe Heming) said that she did so "for the better conduct of Synod business to allow those to be heard who need to be". [See Report of Proceedings, July 2023, page 296].

Currently, the Report of Proceedings, while containing a verbatim report of the presentation, does not include the speeches in reply by Ms Sanghera and Mr Reeves. Will the Clerk to the Synod please undertake to ensure that a verbatim record of their speeches is added as a second Appendix to the Report (and posted on the C of E website) so that there is a complete and accurate public record of what was said in response to the presentation?

Ms Jenny Jacobs replied as Clerk to the Synod: The sitting of the Synod was adjourned by the Chair; anything that occurred during this time was not recorded as the Synod was not sitting. What was said by Ms Sanghera and Mr Reeves will not be added to the verbatim report as they did not form part of the Synod's proceedings.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

205. *Mr Clive Billenness (Europe)* asked the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: In July 2022, General Synod voted in a Following Motion to GS 2261 (Review Of Strategic Development Funding And Lowest Income Communities Funding) to request that a follow-up review be conducted with results presented for consideration in July 2024. Can you please provide details of progress made towards conducting this follow-up review?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: Terms of reference for an independent follow-up to the review are currently being developed. It is anticipated that the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board will commission the review by the first quarter of 2024.

To inform this work and the review of apportionment it has committed to, the Council has commissioned a Diocesan Finances Review to enhance our shared understanding of the financial condition of each diocese, including the risks to sustainability and a transparent presentation of how resources are held and used.

206. *The Revd Mark Miller (Durham)* asked the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: What risk assessment has been carried out by the Finance Committee of the impact of the uncertainty currently being created by the PLF [*Prayers of Love and Faith*] process on the size of worshipping communities, the number of regular givers, and the overall level of giving in the Church, and where can Synod members access this risk assessment?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: As noted in GS Misc 1354, at its September meeting the Archbishops'

Council considered a preliminary analysis of the threats and opportunities to its objectives from *Living in Love and Faith* (LLF). In addition to the discussion at the meeting, Council members were asked to offer detailed comments by correspondence so that an updated version can be prepared for consideration at the Council's December meeting.

The initial conclusion of this work was that there are substantial risks and opportunities arising from the LLF work to the objectives of the Council, particularly in the areas of young people, a more diverse church, and underlying finances, but that at this stage there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the balance of those risks was more towards opportunity or threat.

207. *Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury)* asked the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: In February 2020, GS 2159 (Climate emergency & carbon reduction target) was amended (with 144 votes in favour, 129 against & 10 abstentions) in order to achieve net zero by 2030 rather than by 2045. Following the passing of the amendment, the erstwhile Bishop of Salisbury and then relevant lead bishop stated: "... You've put an enormous burden on yourselves and the wider Church in setting the targets that you have ..."; "... I don't know how we're going to do it ..."; and "... I have to say I think it's a very tall order that you have set yourselves". Later in the debate, the now Chair of the Finance Committee of the Archbishops' Council stated: "... I fear that we have set a target which is totally unrealistic [and] is unsupported by any plans"

In February 2020, Synod was provided with neither costings nor any cost-benefit analysis as to how net zero might be achieved by 2030. Since then, whilst some judicious expenditure may be wise, there are: still yawning gaps in the technology and its appropriateness; genuine doubts and concerns about both renewable energy and energy security; and a growing secular realisation that a deadline of net zero by 2030 is hopelessly unrealistic.

Does the Chair of the Finance Committee of the Archbishops' Council stand by his comments and can he now commission the relevant costings and cost-benefit analysis?

Mr Carl Hughes (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee: In 2020, Synod supported an amendment to bring forward the Church's net zero aspiration from 2045 to 2030. Personally, I would have preferred a longer timescale supported by a financial plan and a cost-benefit analysis. Consequently, £190 million has been built into spending plans to 2031 to help the Church address this issue (see GS 2262).

£30 million of this funding is available in 2023-2025. The Council has approved funding allocations within this to build national and diocesan capacity and support a range of projects to help develop a broader plan of actions, including estimated costs and benefits (approximate figures):

- Energy audits / net zero carbon action plans in 1,600 parishes;

- Decarbonisation demonstrator projects in 70 churches, 60 of which will receive 25% grant funding;
- Small scale decarbonisation works (e.g. LED lighting and draught proofing) in 1,000 churches;
- Piloting new net zero technologies (annual target: 8-12 Church pilots);
- Parish Match Funding campaign, initially in 90 churches in two dioceses, with expansion in the second year if successful;
- Energy/emissions surveys across a representative sample of 110 houses in 4 dioceses to inform the development of the housing decarbonisation workstream;
- Work supporting schools, cathedrals and TElS.

The aspirational target set by the Synod in 2020 remains an immense challenge.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

208. *The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TElS)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: How many people have been recommended by Stage 2 discernment panels in 2023? For comparison, please could you include with your answer the numbers recommended each year for the preceding five years?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: In total, 379 candidates were recommended to train for ordained ministry in 2023. This compares as follows:

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
580	551	591	501	374	379

209. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What are the figures for the cohort of ordinands which began training this September (2023) by gender, and in five-year age bands, when separated into the three different modes of ordination training: full-time residential, mixed mode and part time?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Figures for ordinands entering training this autumn are still provisional so their accuracy cannot be guaranteed. However, the figures such as we have them at present will be placed on the noticeboard.

210. *Mrs Jennifer Fellows (Gloucester)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: How many ordinands deferred their ordination in 2023, and is this significantly higher than previous years?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Dioceses do not in general report in advance which candidates will or will not be ordained each year. During the autumn we gather information about the ordinations

that have taken place which can be compared with information about those completing training. The information has not yet been gathered this year. It would in any case not indicate whether the candidate chose to defer ordination or whether they were not ordained this year for any other reason.

211. *Mrs Sarah Finch (London)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Please would you list, by training institution, the numbers of ordinands in training by year group, giving the numbers of ordinands aged under 30, 31-40, 41-50 and over 51 in each institution?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: All figures for this term are still provisional so their accuracy cannot be guaranteed. However, the figures such as we have them at present will be placed on the noticeboard.

212. *Miss Debbie Buggs (London)* 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: This question has arisen before. Given that both the wording and punctuation of the previous question, asked by the Revd Canon Rick Stordy in July 2023, were identical in every detail to this question we respectfully direct Miss Buggs's attention to our previous reply.

213. *Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Why has the length of time between a person passing away and having a church funeral service and burial, lengthened considerably in the last 50 years? What actions are being taken to reduce the waiting time?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: As far as we know, data are not available to substantiate any answer to this question which means any response would be based on opinion rather than fact.

214. *Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: What were the numbers of male and female stipendiary clergy, and male and female SSM clergy, in each diocese in the year ending December 2022?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The 2022 Ministry Statistics are currently being compiled and are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year, and so this information will not be available until then.

215. *Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Employers do not generally require their employees to move out of the

geographical area of service upon their retirement; the Church of England is the exception. This necessitates the newly retired clergy to move and pay for removal expenses. These costs may be significant, and will often necessitate the retiree to use their savings or some of their pension pot to pay for them. Could this be reconsidered and for the Church of England to introduce a "Removal Contribution" for retiring clergy? This would seem to be appropriate and justified for the years of service given to the Church and God's people.

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Clergy office holders are provided with accommodation for the better performance of their duties, with the result that they need to vacate the provided house, to make it available for their successor. In this, they are not dissimilar from employees who are provided with tied housing. Clergy moving to a home in retirement would need to pay tax on any contribution to their removal costs. The idea of a Removal Grant could be considered by RACSC if there is appetite, but these grants would probably have to be funded by the sending diocese, and it would be necessary to consult dioceses first. Given existing pressures on diocesan finances, it is likely that few of them would consider this additional demand on their funds to be affordable.

216. *The Revd Mark Wallace (Chelmsford) asked the Chair of the Ministry Council:* Given that there is now no fixed date for retirement in law, what plans are there to explore the repeal of 1975 Measure which introduced a fixed retirement age for clergy; and if there are no such plans, on what grounds?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Legislation requires clergy to retire at 70, but also enables clergy over 70 to hold office for a fixed (and renewable) term in certain circumstances. For more information, see: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/ac-age-limit-measure-guidance-for-website-october-2017_0.pdf

Changes were made to the 1975 Age Limit Measure which were approved by the Synod and Parliament in 2017. There are no further plans for them to be amended.

We note that it is lawful to have a compulsory retirement age for employees provided that it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Moreover, because the clergy default retirement age of 70 is conferred by statute, an objective justification for having a default retirement age is not legally required for clergy office holders in the way that it is for employees.

217. *The Revd Fr Thomas Seville (Religious Communities) asked the Chair of the Ministry Council:* How many clergy who have withdrawn from full-time or part-time parochial ministry, or have transitioned to other forms of labour in recent years (2020-2022), give as reasons stress or disillusionment for their so doing?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: The number of clergy ceasing ministry for reasons other than death, retirement, or moving to another role was 70 in both 2019 and 2020, and 90 in 2021.

Clergy are not required to give their reasons for ceasing ministry and, even when a reason is given, it is not reported to the Ministry Development Team, which means that we are unable to provide information on how many clergy have ceased ministry because of stress or disillusionment.

218. *Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle)* asked the Chair of the Ministry Council: Current confirmation forms ask the person to state their gender. Presenting this as a binary choice has proven to be a barrier for some young people completing this form can I ask:

1. What is this data used for and why is this question necessary?
2. If dioceses are required to collect this data, has consideration been given to making the form more inclusive, for example adding an option allowing people to self-describe?

The Bishop of Chester (The Rt Revd Mark Tanner) replied as Chair of the Ministry Council: Canon law requires that a register of confirmations is retained by each parish, but does not specifically require gender to be included in the register. The data is collated at a diocesan and national level to report on trends in confirmation services across the Church. We aim to align any data collection which includes gender to the Office of National Statistics model, and will review our practice for confirmation data collection against this standard.

REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE

219. *The Revd Martin Thorpe (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: Given the increasing prevalence and proven benefits of the 4-day working week in UK institutions, which committee of the Church of England could give consideration to a 5-day working week for clergy (i.e. by recommending amending standard Terms of Service to give entitlement to a 48 hour rest period)?

The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson) replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: After a similar question in February last year from the Revd Prebendary Rosie Austin, RACSC considered whether it might be helpful to confer on clergy a statutory entitlement to a 48-hour rest period once a week. We noted that clergy already have a high degree of discretion about when they work that enables them to work flexibly, respond appropriately to pastoral emergencies, and to take care of themselves and their families. We concluded that clergy were best placed to determine their own working patterns, and that there was a risk that some clergy might feel that they were being put under pressure to condense their workload over a shorter working week. We commend the practice in many dioceses of recommending clergy to

take a 48-hour continuous rest period once a month, and take the view that guidance is preferable to conferring more legal entitlement.

220. *Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: What justifies differing levels of stipends in the C of E based on role (as opposed to family situation) if we are sticking with the language of stipend?

The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson) replied as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee: The principle of differing levels of stipend was examined in detail in “Generosity & Sacrifice,” a review undertaken in the early 2000s about clergy remuneration. That review concluded that additional payments in recognition of additional responsibility were not incompatible with the principle of a stipend. The Remuneration Review debated by the General Synod in Feb 2021: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/gs-2247-clergy-remuneration-review-report.pdf> also came to this view.

Although the stipend is seen as a payment that enables someone to carry out their ministry, this has never been understood as meaning that all clergy should receive an identical stipend. Dioceses are free to fix their own stipend levels with reference to the National Minimum Stipend and the National Stipend Benchmark, and some pay area/rural deans an additional amount. The differentials for archdeacons, deans, bishops and residentiary canons were last discussed at General Synod in November 2002, when the Synod agreed that the level of the differentials should be reduced.

MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

221. *Mr Clive Scowen (London)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: Since early May in the Indian state of Manipur, what appear to be orchestrated and pre-planned attacks against the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zo people have broken out, led by armed groups of mainly Hindu Meitei radicals, leading to the displacement of 70,000 people, thousands of homes burned down, and hundreds of Christian villages destroyed. The violence has severely impacted both the Kuki and Meitei Christian communities, with up to 500 churches, Christian schools and seminaries burned down by Meitei radicals, according to a BBC report. There have been several hundred deaths.

What has been done on behalf of the Church of England (i) to urge His Majesty's Government to use its influence and make representations on behalf of the suffering Christians of Manipur; and (ii) to provide spiritual support and practical help to our persecuted brothers and sisters in that state?

Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: The reports emerging from Manipur paint a bleak picture of grave abuses against human rights, human dignity and disruption of peaceful relations between communities. With access to Manipur restricted and the internet shut down, it is impossible to draw definitive

conclusions on either the breadth of the violence, or whether it was pre-meditated and co-ordinated. Against this uncertain but worrying background, the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a call to prayer for those affected by the violence, while bishops have tabled parliamentary questions in the House of Lords. Faith and Public Life staff have raised this matter with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief and with the Indian High Commission. Staff have also been in touch with the Church of North India to offer support and have met pastorally with Anglican Christians in the UK that have connections with Manipur. This is a matter that will continue to be on the Church's agenda going forward, as will broader concerns regarding freedom of religion or belief in India.

222. *Canon Peter Adams (St Albans)* asked the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: In light of (1) the strong support shown by both Archbishops, who jointly launched Gypsy Roma Traveller Friendly Churches in June this year, (2) General Synod's 2019 recommendation that churches look at making land available for Traveller sites, and (3) given the desire of the Archbishops' Commission on Housing to provide safe sustainable and stable housing for those most in need using Church land; can the Mission and Public Affairs Council update Synod on what has been done to make land available for urgently needed Gypsy and Traveller sites for both people travelling (which can be achieved through identifying land where people can stay for short periods of time) and for residential pitches (for people to live on when they are not travelling)?

Mr Mark Sheard (ex officio) replied as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council: I am happy to respond on behalf of the Racial Justice Unit and the Archbishops' Housing Advisory Board who are both active in this area.

Enabling Church land to be used by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, for both short term and residential pitches, starts with building relationships at the local levels where land holdings are located, and where, in most cases, the land is owned. The Racial Justice Unit is engaged in an extensive programme of work with GRT communities and local churches to build trust and inclusivity in Church life. This work is part of the capacity-building that must precede practical provision.

The fruits of this will take time to be realised, but we know of two areas where dialogue has begun between the local authority and local churches to work in partnership to provide land for short term pitches. It will take time to reach firm commitments, but we always knew there were no quick fixes here.

In the provision of long-term pitches, we are exploring examples of good practice from other organisations, especially housing associations, some with Church connections, which could help local churches and dioceses to get started.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

223. *Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: What conclusions have been drawn from the questions in the post-Synod survey re Synod members' travel to and from York last July?

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) replied as Chair of the Business Committee: Of those who completed the post-Synod survey, 182 people used some form of public transport to get to York, while 57 travelled by car alone. Obviously, this is only a snapshot, and not all members completed the survey, but it is encouraging to see that public transport is the most popular means to travel to the July group of sessions.

224. *The Revd Martin Thorpe (Liverpool)* asked the Chair of the Business Committee: Given the ever-growing list of Private Members' Motions and Diocesan Synod Motions requested to be debated at General Synod, please could the Business Committee give serious consideration to using the remaining November sessions of this quinquennium to clearing some of that backlog rather than releasing those dates?

Canon Robert Hammond replied as Chair of the Business Committee: The Business Committee is pleased to see members and dioceses engaging with the Synodical process and submitting motions. The decision to go ahead with November sessions is made by the Presidents on advice from the Business Committee, who do give serious consideration to the items of business and their relative importance, the costs of holding the meetings, the impact on members, particularly working laity and the number of items in the pipeline.

Members are always advised to keep November dates free, and the Business Committee aims to give as much notice as possible about November synods.

RULE COMMITTEE

225. *Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)* asked the Chair of the Rule Committee: Under Schedule 1 of The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019, there is a subsection called "Matters which may be undertaken without a faculty". List A7(2) allows church paths and other hard surfaces to be repaired, including resurfacing, using the same materials and colour without a faculty or consultation.

This could potentially allow the main access path to the church or church car park to be resurfaced in gravel, or other similar materials, which are acknowledged as inaccessible surfaces for disabled people.

Could the Church of England address this matter by moving A7 (2) to List B, so that consultation is required by the archdeacon and stipulate that, where paths require resurfacing, this work is carried out using materials that provide a bound, firm and level

surface that is accessible for disabled people (particularly wheelchair and mobility scooter users), and are therefore compliant with the Equality Act 2010?

The Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (Dean of the Arches) replied as Chair of the Rule Committee: The intention of the question to encourage equal access to church buildings is one that is supported by the staff of the Church Buildings Council and is consistent with the intention of that Council's guidance on equal access. This specific request will need to be considered by the Rule Committee to determine if the requested amendment would be an efficient way of achieving the outcome requested.

The rules as drafted would not prevent a church seeking permission to change the surface of its paths to provide more equal access. A change to churchyard paths may also require planning permission from the local authority, and this would leave any requirement for the archdeacon to stipulate a particular surface subject to local authority consent, a point that the Rule Committee would need to take into consideration.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

226. *Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely)* asked the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee: Has the Committee considered whether there should be a procedure in place to address any case where a motion passed by Synod is subsequently found to have been predicated on legal advice that was, inadvertently, incorrect, unreliable, or subsequently withdrawn or revised; if so, what was its conclusion; if not, will it now do so?

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds) replied as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee: This has not been considered yet by the Standing Orders Committee. However, the Committee is always open to listening to members' suggestions for how the Standing Orders can be improved. As you have raised this question, the Committee will consider this at its next meeting.

THE CHAIR *The Bishop of Hereford (The Rt Revd Richard Jackson)* took the Chair at 2.00 pm

ITEM 501

SPECIAL AGENDA I:

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

PAYMENTS TO THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST ORDER 2023 (GS 2326)

The Chair: Good afternoon, Synod. We move on to Item 501 which is the Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2023. Members will need Order Paper IV and GS 2326 and the Explanatory Memorandum 2326X. As this item has a financial implication, I draw your attention to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Financial Memorandum

in Notice Paper III. I would like to invite the Revd Canon Flora Winfield, Third Church Estates Commissioner, to move Item 501. She has up to 10 minutes.

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (Third Church Estates Commissioner): Thank you very much, Chair, and good afternoon, Synod.

The motion before you seeks the approval of Synod for the Church Commissioners' contribution to the funding of the Churches Conservation Trust over the next three years, from 2024 to 2027, as set out in GS 2326.

So what is the Churches Conservation Trust, why do we contribute to its funding, and why does it matter? You may recall from the Mission and Pastoral Measure debate in July that the Churches Conservation Trust was established in 1969 in the original Pastoral Measure, and its mission is to provide a home for those consecrated church buildings of highly listed status and unique character which are no longer needed for regular public worship. These are churches which could not significantly be altered to enable a new use. The CCT provides a long-term and secure settlement for these unique buildings, keeping them open, accessible and in use for their local communities, and all those who visit.

Today the CCT looks after 357 church buildings across England, from tiny thatched village churches to huge urban buildings from the days of Victorian industrial expansion. We are partners with the CCT in this shared endeavour. It works with and alongside the local parish clergy, the Church and wider communities to ensure that these buildings are well looked after, and to support the volunteers who give their time and energy to make that happen.

When closed churches are transferred to the CCT, they take responsibility for the care and maintenance of the buildings and the churches remain open for Occasional Worship. It is the Commissioners who are responsible for deciding which churches should be transferred to the CCT after consultation with the relevant parish, diocese and the CCT, and a scheme is then published under the Mission and Pastoral Measure to allow wider consultation.

These provisions form part of the wider Church and State partnership which governs the protection and care of the Church's historic built heritage. This is a unique arrangement because the CCT is jointly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Church Commissioners. As core funders, the Commissioners and the DCMS contribute nearly 70% of the CCT's income, with the remainder coming from the CCT's own enterprise and fundraising. His Majesty's Government actually provides most of the funding - £8.7 million from their current funding period, which is almost double what the Church contributes. In an era of constrained public spending, and a decrease in the dedicated grant funding streams for church buildings, this long-term commitment is particularly welcome.

Our funding contribution is agreed every three years by the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors acting on the recommendation of the Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee. The Board approved this Order in April 2023, and it is a requirement of the Mission and Pastoral Measure that the General Synod then votes to approve the Order which is before Synod today.

So what funding is it proposed that the Commissioners will provide? The Order sets out the details, and we plan to contribute £4.8 million over the next three-year period, consisting of £3.3 million from the Commissioners' General Fund and £1.3 million from sales proceeds. In addition, if net sales proceeds are above £0.65 million in any calendar year of the triennium, a further amount of up to £0.9 million in aggregate over the triennium can be paid for additional support. This funding will be used to meet ongoing costs, including maintenance, repair and community support, and funds for new vestings.

It is worth mentioning that this is not the only funding support for church buildings which is made available by the Church Commissioners. The Commissioners have also invested £11 million in this triennium in the Buildings for Mission Programme. This provides for new church buildings support officers in dioceses, to support parishes in their work related to the historic church buildings, and there is also a dedicated repair fund.

So how can we see the positive impact of the CCT? Let me give you a few examples. Over one million people visited CCT churches in the last year. The quality of the CCT's work on these unique historic buildings has been recognised with awards. The Transformation of Holy Trinity, Sunderland from a building which was on the Heritage at Risk register in 2017 to being a new space for culture, heritage and events, has won nine national and regional awards, including the RIBA North East Building of the Year for 2023.

And the work of the CCT has contributed positively to work on environment and health and wellbeing. For example, there is a church in our Partnership Project in Norfolk which is funded by Defra and which brings together the Diocese of Norwich, the Broads Authority and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and includes four churches in the care of CCT in Bungay, Hellington, Moulton St Mary and Buckenham. All these are participating in a range of activities, from volunteer wildlife surveys to scything days. The local Men's Shed is making nest boxes for birds, and there are cycling and walking routes which will complement these activities to encourage new visitors and promote healthy living.

Very importantly, the Churches Conservation Trust has also been able to make its specialist expertise in conservation and community development available for parish church communities which need extra support. These are not churches vested in the CCT. These are churches still the responsibility of the parish.

One example is in the tiny village of Stowlangtoft in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, where the CCT has worked with the community to make the church a focus for the village again. Reflecting on the CCT's help, the rector said, "They see it as a place for worship, a place to be proud of, a place to be committed to; a place to cherish because

it has brought the community together”, and added, “The CCT has helped us up the first few rungs of the ladder to being a resurrected and sustainable church”.

So can Synod have confidence that the CCT is doing its job well? It is good governance practice to undertake periodic reviews and, following some questions raised by Synod members in previous sessions, the Church Commissioners have listened to the issues raised and commissioned an independent consultant to complete a strategic and financial and governance review of the CCT. The resulting report was clear that there were no major issues of concern, but quite properly identified areas where there was room for improvement, in financial reporting, for example, and issues which could be addressed to mitigate risk. The CCT Board accepted these findings and also signed off an improvement plan. The majority of actions from that plan have either been completed or are under way.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank in particular those members of Synod who gave their time and energy to engage with this work, and who have fed into the process as we develop this funding Order: their wisdom was invaluable. We can also see that the CCT is looking after their highly listed churches well, with over 73% recorded in a recent survey as being in a “good” or “very good” condition.

So why does the CCT matter, and why should we fund it? It matters because it keeps these highly listed churches of unique significance open for their communities and in a good state of repair, relieving the burden from hard-working clergy and PCCs so that they can devote time and energy to mission and the cure of souls. It matters because it offers help to parishes and dioceses by providing additional capacity and specialist expertise to help them make good repair and conservation decisions. It matters because it helps us, collectively, to fulfil our responsibilities to these historically significant buildings, which are also part of the nation’s heritage. It also matters because it is a financial partnership with Government. Our funding unlocks almost twice the amount from Government in addition.

So it is important that we continue this funding, giving continued stability for the churches that the CCT manages, and ensuring that essential Government funding of almost £9 million is similarly maintained.

I thank you for your attention and invite Synod to approve this funding Order. I move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Item 501 is now open to debate. I think we are going to take a couple at five minutes, and then I will reduce the speech limit to three minutes. Peter Harris for a maiden speech and then Stephen Hogg.

Professor Peter Harris (Southwell & Nottingham): Thank you, Revd Winfield, for that commendation of this motion. I firmly support the work of the CCT, not only in my diocese but other dioceses as well, because it is an important contribution to the life of the community and an ongoing keeping of historic buildings/historic churches open not only

for worship but also for the community. It is an essential part of the life of our Church, and our country, that these churches are maintained and, as you have said, the issue of maintaining commitment from the Government is important, and the unlocking of that financial commitment is crucial.

I would like to challenge one element of the Report, though, which is about how the future of the historic buildings is maintained because, in the Report, it refers to much of the work of the CCTV - the CCT - I come from a district council background and CCTV in my town is very important, so I apologise for that slip of the tongue!

The issue is that much of the work is centred around the community support, capital building and the volunteers and friends. I am challenging the “much”, because surely the vast majority of the work of the CCT should be in terms of building that community support to keep the churches open. As the Church of England, I do not think we do enough to support our communities in working with our churches, and I hope that is something that the CCT will continue to push and move up the agenda.

I urge you to vote for this motion; it is an important one for our heritage.

Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds): I support and encourage Synod to approve this funding order. I was among those people who, three years ago, were not convinced. I was made aware of the review referred to in the funding paper and by Canon Flora, and read it with great interest. My career was in improving financial performance within organisations, mainly charities. What I saw in that Report was a report of an organisation that was not terribly good at its reporting. There was no indication of anything sinister, but it struck me that an organisation that was not very mature in its internal reporting, and not very clear or transparent in its external reporting, was in need of improvement.

For the past few months, I have been having conversations with the trustees and senior staff at CCT and have been very impressed with their response, both to the Report and to my uncharacteristically direct challenges. I believe CCT is at a pivotal point in its journey, and, to enable its development, I fully support this funding order.

I have some concerns. I do not think it is enough money, and I am rather worried that the uplift is inadequate. However, this can be addressed if the Commissioners and CCT adopt a more flexible approach to funding, and if the Commissioners can leave the door open during this three-year term for extra funding as defined and fully justified needs arise.

As Canon Flora has said, CCT is a centre of excellence in the skills required to look after church buildings. Moreover, it has a bank of expertise on how to keep buildings open and how to keep buildings used. As the Mission and Pastoral Measure plays out over the next months and years, it may be that more churches are facing part-time use or redundancy. I believe that the CCT is well placed to be a partner in the processes around trying to keep those churches used, useful and open. CCT’s expertise in heritage care

and repair could, with proper funding and resourcing, be extended to a wider audience of parish churches and cathedrals in need of that expertise.

I have been on quite a journey with the CCT over the last few months as a critical friend - more critic than friend perhaps - but I am now an enthusiastic supporter of their work, and I would like to see flexible changes in how they are funded.

So, Synod, please vote for this funding and, if it gives you any comfort, I have offered to continue to walk alongside CCT as it continues to improve its reporting. There may be better ways of funding and better ways of working, a more flexible relationship, but the CCT has my support, if nothing else for its ability to take this Report on the chin. We need them: please approve this funding.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Julie Dziegiel (Oxford): The fantastic and really important thing about the payments we make to the Churches Conservation Trust is simply that it attracts Government money to support these buildings. The DCMS - the Department for Culture, Media and Sport - puts in much more money than we do, just under £3 million in 2022-2023. That is £3 million in just one year, which we do not have to use to fund our buildings. We can use that for mission, for clergy on the ground and to bring people to know the love of Jesus Christ.

Our buildings are a huge blessing. They give us spaces to worship our Lord which are often majestic and built by our ancestors to the glory of God, but the maintenance of these buildings is incredibly expensive, and in a situation where it is appropriate to transfer a building to the CCT, it is right that Government funds assist in the upkeep of these historic buildings.

To slightly misquote a wonderful woman from the north, Jo Beacroft-Mitchell, with whom I was a member of the Stewardship Committee a good number of years ago, we are not the spiritual wing of the National Trust. We have other things to spend our money on. Please approve this Order and let the Government give us some money.

The Chair: After Andrew Gray, I am inclined to call one more speaker before going to a motion for closure.

Mr Andrew Gray (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): I will also be speaking in support of this motion. Three years ago, I certainly did not, and much of the improvement that has taken place is because of - and I pay tribute to Stephen Hogg, actually, for much of this - the hard work that has gone into this.

The CCT was not in a good place. It had hit only seven of its own 14 key performance indicators, its accounts were opaque, a number of its church buildings were on the Heritage at Risk register. Many of them lacked permanent roofs and one of them, in

Lincolnshire, had even burnt down. So it was not exactly in a happy place. But, as the Third Estates Commissioner has alluded to, there has been an independent review and the CCT has taken steps to adopt that, which is to be welcomed.

So where are we today? It is fair to say there is a new CEO and there is a new person who is in charge of the finances: that is very much to be welcomed. I also echo what Stephen Hogg said, I think the Churches Conservation Trust is going to need more money, and one of my big concerns when I first raised these issues was I thought if it is going to need more money, and if there are going to be more buildings coming down the railway track, if I can mix my metaphors, I really felt that the organisation needed to be match-fit so that it is ready to take on those new challenges.

I would like to say a couple of things, two things really, about the independent Report. I would like to challenge one thing the Third Estates Commissioner said when she said there were no major problems found. It depends how you define "major". One thing the Report said was that trustees were not provided with information about payments to and from churches, which is, in my view, pretty major if your one and only job as an organisation is to look after churches.

Anyway, leaving that aside, there is a recommendation that was made, and I would like to ask the Third Estates Commissioner if she would back this recommendation, which was how the CCT spends its money should be presented to Synod members in a way that gives more detail than the annual accounts do. The Report actually says this, "I suggest this includes sufficient detail to answer questions from members of Synod, or others with legitimate reason for wanting more information, than is routinely put into the public domain". We do not have that in the support paper, and I would like to ask you whether we are going to see that in future support papers.

Here I want to come to a point about culture. When Stephen and I first started questioning the CCT, we just hit a wall of resistance, and it really should not be that way. I am very grateful you actually said thank you because I think that is the first time anyone has ever thanked me for doing any *pro bono* work in the Church of England, I can tell you, so I appreciate that, but we really did hit a culture of "Who are you? Go away" as opposed to, "Do we have a problem?"

I would like to say this is why we have a trust deficit in this Church. We should start seeing each other not as "them and us" but as colleagues. I do support this motion. I support it with the caveats I have mentioned. I am very encouraged by the fact that my friend and colleague Stephen Hogg will be keeping an eye on the ship, and I think there is a whole piece that we might want to come back to, Synod, if I had the time to discuss it, about strategy and what strategy is going to look like for the CCT in the future. I think there is a whole piece of work to be done there, but let us come back to that at another time and yes, this does have my support, thank you.

The Revd Marcus Walker (London): I am delighted to see so many people here for such an important debate. The survival of our churches and church buildings is one of the most important questions for this Synod, and I am delighted to support this proposal today, with, I suppose, two particular questions to the Third Church Estates Commissioner.

We are only increasing the budget by half of inflation, which means that it is going to be very difficult for them to be able to maintain even the churches that they have. The ill-fated GS 2222 which preceded a potential new Mission and Pastoral Measure just before this Synod met, revealed that dioceses had identified hundreds of churches that they intended to close, and that five dioceses had identified 40 churches in each to close. How many of those churches do you expect to be able to be handed over to the Churches Conservation Trust within this time period when they have not actually had any significant increase in their budget?

And secondly, the CCT has so much experience of going in and supporting churches to survive. The Mission and Pastoral Measure as proposed talks so well about hoping to avoid church closures by supporting churches to survive. To what extent do you intend to use them in order to be able to provide that experience and resource? They say that an additional £150,000 to £200,000 would enable them to go into 10 to 15 parishes year to be able to help them survive. Would that be money worth spending?

The Chair: I now wish to test the mind of the Synod on whether Item 501 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 501.

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

The Chair: That is carried. I now call on Canon Winfield to reply to the debate. You have up to 10 minutes

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield (Third Church Estates Commissioner): Thank you to colleagues from Synod for their very warm response to this motion, for which we are very, very grateful. Particular thanks to Stephen Hogg and Andrew Gray, who have travelled so faithfully with the Churches Conservation Trust through this period of change and reform for the organisation. I am grateful to them for recognising its trajectory of improvement, and the determination on the part of the staff to make sure that it is, as Andrew Gray says, match-fit for future demands. It is always lovely to hear Synod ask if we could possibly spend more money on something, and we will certainly go away and consider these questions seriously.

It is clear to all of us, I think, that the Churches Conservation Trust is an important partner, bringing its experience and resource to help churches live well into the future, which is all our aim, and particularly in enabling churches to remain open for their communities, because an open church door is a door through which people can go and inside discover the wonder of God at work, in beauty and grace. I am grateful for those comments and

those contributions. I am grateful, too, to Julie Dziegiel for her warm support for our attempts to access Government funding.

I think it is clear to all of us that we should support this work, but that we also need to continue to travel with the CCT as they continue on this journey into a future partnership which will be important to all of us, and which also includes other significant partners around this area.

I thank you for your contributions to this debate, and I thank you for your insight that the Churches Conservation Trust is an essential part of the life of the Church from Peter Harris, and I really appreciate your support for the Order. We will continue to travel as critical and supportive friends with the Churches Conservation Trust, so that these beloved and significant buildings, which are part of our unique shared heritage, can continue to be sacramental signs in the landscape; outward and visible signs of God's inward and spiritual grace at work among us; such important signs of God's presence in every community. Thank you very much.

The Chair: I now put Item 501 "That the Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order be approved" to the vote.

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

The Chair: That item is carried and that Order will now be laid before Parliament. That concludes that item. The next item is Amendments to Standing Orders (GS 2327). Thank you.

THE CHAIR *The Revd Zoe Heming (Lichfield)* took the Chair at 2.29 pm

ITEM 13

AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS (GS 2327)

The Chair: We have now come to Amendments to the Standing Orders. Members will need GS 2327, Order Paper IV and the Tenth Notice Paper. In a moment I will call on the Revd Canon Joyce Jones, as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, to move the amendments proposed by the Standing Orders Committee. These are set out in Items 13 to 20 in Order Paper IV. Items 13 to 19 deal with amendments to Standing Order 43, which is about petitions. Item 20 deals with amendments to Standing Order 78, which is about liturgical business.

Synod is reminded that we have timed business following on from this which will start promptly at 3.30pm whether we have finished or not, so, with the exception of those who have amendments in their name, who will have five minutes, all speech limits for all of the debates which we may have on this item will start at three minutes, so you may want to start reducing what you want to say. I now call on the Revd Canon Joyce Jones to speak

and to move Item 13, and to speak to but not move Items 14 to 19. She has up to 10 minutes.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): As members are aware, the role of the Standing Orders Committee is to keep the Standing Orders under review and to propose amendments where it thinks these are appropriate. It also has a duty to advise the Synod of amendments proposed by members, and may decide to support these or not and, if not, the members may propose them themselves.

The Standing Orders Committee has on this occasion proposed several amendments which the Business Committee has said are capable of being deemed business, relating to speech limits for people using an interpreter, the order of considering amendments, the length of supplementary questions, practical matters relating to answering questions between groups of sessions and supplementary information and corrections, making available up-to-date contact details of Synod members to other members, and standing without difficulty.

These are listed in Notice Paper 10 and have been deemed. No one has asked for them not to be deemed, so they will come into effect after this Synod. Any other amendments passed today will only come into effect after the end of this Synod.

Other amendments proposed by members have been considered but not supported by the Committee, as members will have read in the Report. The Committee is proposing for debate a series of amendments on petitions and a clarifying amendment on legislative business.

I will speak first to Item 13, Standing Order 43, on petitions. This is something which the Standing Orders Committee has kept under review and is keeping under review. It makes provision for members to present a petition to Synod. This provision had been very little used until the current quinquennium but, as several members have made use of it in recent groups of sessions, the Standing Orders Committee has decided to propose amendments to the Standing Orders to make the procedure clearer, and to update it.

The origins of this procedure are unknown but it is likely that it has been carried over from the Standing Orders of earlier bodies such as the Church Assembly and previous Convocations. It is important to note that the word "petition" used here means "request to a higher authority", not a "document signed by a large number of people to be presented to a public body", as we often think of a petition now. You will recall that "petition" is often used as an alternative word for "prayer" and it is in that sort of sense that it is used.

The Business Committee, once a petition has been presented, can forward the request to appropriate bodies if it thinks it appropriate, or it may well feel that a request has been sufficiently heard by being made publicly before Synod. I want to say in particular that a petition is not a way of initiating a debate. This must be done through a Diocesan Synod

Motion or a Private Member's Motion in the usual way. Indeed, its only purpose is to draw the attention of Synod to a matter and perhaps to have that passed on to other authorities.

That is Item 13. Then the amendments, do you wish me to speak to them separately as we get to them?

The Chair: No.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I move Item 13.

The Chair: Could you speak to but not move Items 14 to 19 as well?

ITEM 14

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Items 14 to 19 are the individual amendments to Standing Order 43.

Item 14. This amendment removes the restriction that the petition may only be presented at the first or second session of the group of sessions, which is in the current Standing Orders. Sorry, I have got them in the wrong order here. Item 14 is the amendment requiring the amendment in question to give notice of the petition itself and not merely a desire to present it. This means that notice must be given of the actual wording of the petition rather than just the desire to present it, which allows the Clerk to review it for inappropriate language, and allows the Business Committee to see the context in which it will best be taken.

ITEM 15

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Item 15 says that the amendment will require the notice of petition to contain the full text and also to be accompanied by evidence of support from at least two other members. This makes sure that it is something of concern to more than one member of Synod and indicates support from other people, as well as the full text being presented.

ITEM 16

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Item 16 says that the Clerk must delete from the text of the petition of which notice is given any content which the Clerk considers libellous, insulting or unseemly. It is important to note that there is no right of reply to a petition and it is therefore particularly important that the petition does not contain libellous, insulting or unseemly content because the person about whom libellous, insulting or unseemly things are said would not be able to put their side of the story. This allows the Clerk to remove that content before the petition is presented.

ITEM 17

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Item 17 is where more than one petition is presented and allows the petitions to be presented in the order in which notice is given of them, unless the Chair directs otherwise, so it gives flexibility to the Chair there but provides for order.

ITEM 18

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Item 18 provides that the member in question must not, when presenting the petition, refer to anything deleted from the text by the Clerk (that is any of the unseemly, libellous or insulting material) and it also gives the speech limit of two minutes.

ITEM 19

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Item 19 gives the Business Committee a direction as to what to do with a petition and requires it to update Synod on what has happened to the petition, for example, by explaining what it plans to do in response or whether it plans to do anything in response. Thank you.

The Chair: Item 13 is now open for debate, with a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Synod, I speak as a member of the Standing Orders Committee. My colleagues on the Standing Orders Committee know the views I am going to share and we have discussed these together.

Synod, I am not a fan of petitions. I do not really understand their purpose and I do not understand how they can help us to discern together the issues the Church is facing. The thing that concerns me most is they undermine our democratic processes because we have ways already for members to bring issues of concern to Synod, either through the Private Member's Motion, which we can all sign and support or not, and also through our synodical processes through diocesan synod. We have talked about this at length as the Standing Orders Committee, and I just want you to know that we have debated this.

My preference would be to get rid of Standing Order 43 altogether, but I think that these amendments do improve it immeasurably, and so I urge you to support them, and then we can see how it goes, and, as Joyce has said, we will keep it under review. I just want to urge you to support these amendments but also for you to know that I, for one, am really wondering what they bring to our work together. I think these amendments, though, do improve the good governance around petitions.

The Bishop of Gloucester (The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek): Having just heard what Alison said, I think she has said it all, but I would reiterate it. I, too, want to say I think we need

to get rid of petitions. We have other ways of dealing with things through the Private Member's Motion and through the asking of Questions. I know petitions are there for something to be done, but we have Questions there. I was going to ask the Standing Orders Committee please just to explain why this has not been removed. On the Standing Orders Committee, I would be very interested to know how many people would like these removed and how many would not. It would be helpful to know the discussions that have gone on, but I would like to see petitions removed.

The Chair: Before you begin, Mr Appleton, can I just check that you are speaking on Item 13 rather than your amendment coming at 19?

Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter): I just want to speak in defence of petitions. I think that it is very sensible, and hence why I am moving an amendment that the process, which is from a different era of Synod, is revised to make sure that it is a useful tool. You will remember that in February of this year I brought a petition to Synod, and that was really acting on concerns that were brought to me locally. It is a mechanism for all members, with the people we represent at the deanery level, to be able to raise local concerns.

I think there is a need for revision to make sure that it is a healthy and positive thing, but I think it is a useful mechanism, and so I hope that we can explore making it work rather than removing it.

The Chair: As I see no one else indicating they wish to speak, that debate on Item 13 is closed, and I invite Canon Joyce Jones to reply, should she wish to, to the debate.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I can do that fairly briefly. Thank you, Alison, for your support in this and confirming that these amendments will make a big improvement. Thank you to the Bishop of Gloucester. I note the desire to get rid of petitions. We have discussed this in the Standing Orders Committee. We have not taken a vote on it, so I cannot tell you exactly how many members either way, but there are different views on the Committee, and we are keeping it under review. Some people think it can be a useful mechanism for members; some not. We will continue to keep it under review. Thank you to Luke Appleton for saying that it can be a useful tool for local concerns. We know that, thank you.

The Chair: We will now put Item 13 to the vote by a show of hands or green ticks on Zoom.

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

ITEM 14

The Chair: I now call on the Revd Canon Joyce Jones to formally move Item 14.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I formally move Item 14.

The Chair: Item 14 is now open for debate with the speech limit at three minutes from the outset. I see nobody wishing to indicate that they wish to speak, so I will put Item 14 to the vote.

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

ITEM 15

The Chair: I now call on Joyce Jones to formally move Item 15. You are going to get all of your steps in today.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Exactly. I move Item 15.

The Chair: Thank you. Item 15 is now open for debate. Nobody is indicating they wish to speak, so I put Item 15 to the vote.

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

ITEM 16

The Chair: You know the drill. I now call on Canon Joyce Jones to formally move Item 16.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I move Item 16.

The Chair: Item 16 is now open for debate. Item 16 is now going to be voted upon.

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

ITEM 17

The Chair: Item 17, if Canon Joyce Jones could formally move that, too?

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I formally move Item 17.

The Chair: Item 17 is now open for debate. We now put Item 17 to the vote.

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

ITEM 18

The Chair: Item 18, please would you formally move?

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I formally move Item 18.

The Chair: Item 18 is now open for debate. We will now put Item 18 to the vote.

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

ITEM 19

The Chair: I now call on Canon Joyce Jones to formally move Item 19.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): I move Item 19.

The Chair: Item 19 is open for debate. We have one amendment to Item 19 from Luke Appleton. I now ask Luke to move his amendment, which is 28. If you have lost where we are up to, we are on page 3 now. You have up to five minutes.

ITEM 28

Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter): I will not need five minutes. This is simply about transparency and it is clarifying, I guess, Item 19. It is just making sure that when comment or a written report on the petition is distributed that there is the full text of the petition distributed with it. I move the amendment in my name.

The Chair: Under Standing Order 127 I now call back the Revd Canon Joyce Jones to see whether you would like, on behalf of the Committee, the debate to continue on this Item.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): The Committee is happy for the debate to continue on this item.

The Chair: Excellent. The debate on Item 28 is now open. We will now move straight to voting on Item 28.

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

The Chair: The debate now continues on Item 19 as amended. This is now open for debate again. I now put Item 19 as amended to the vote.

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

The Chair: Synod, that ends the debate on amending Standing Order 43. We now turn to Standing Order 78, which is liturgical business, but not yet the standalone matter. I

therefore call on Revd Canon Joyce Jones to speak to and move Item 20. You have up to 10 minutes.

ITEM 20

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Thank you, Chair. The amendment of Standing Order 78 proposed by the Standing Orders Committee is not an amendment of substance but an amendment of clarification concerning the bringing of liturgical business to Synod. And so, just to help members to understand, this, hopefully, and I am sure you do anyway but to go through it, I am just going to refer to the Canons which govern liturgy and liturgy in church.

Canon B 1 lists the categories of forms of service which may be used such as the *Book of Common Prayer*, *Common Worship* and other authorized services. Canon B 2 gives Synod a role in approving forms of services, and these forms of service may be forms of service which are alternatives to the services in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

However, this is not the only way in which forms of service may be approved. Canons B 4 and B 5 make provision for the use of forms of service on occasions for which no provision is made in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Under Canon B 4 these can be approved by the Convocations, by the Archbishops, or by the diocesan bishop for use in their respective provinces or dioceses.

Canon B 5 gives a discretion to the minister conducting a service to make minor variations to an authorized service according to circumstances. In addition, the minister with the cure of souls in a parish may use forms of service considered suitable by him or her for occasions where no provision is made in the *Book of Common Prayer*, or may permit another minister to do so. This is a provision widely used by all traditions in the Church. It is the provision by which we have services, anything from benediction of the sacrament to Messy Church, and all of those things in between, which very many of us do, and that is the Canon which allows us to do that. The bishops may commend forms of service for ministers to use in exercise of their discretion.

Canon B 5A provides for the authorization of services for an experimental period before they are submitted under B 2, after consultation with the House of Bishops.

Standing Order 80 provides that liturgical business for First Consideration by Synod under Canon B 2 shall only be circulated to members on the instructions of the House of Bishops. The Business Committee then have to decide how the business is to be dealt with under 78, out of three possible alternatives. This differs, for example, from the procedure for Article 7 or 8 business, because, in those cases, the Business Committee under section 91, has the function of declaring whether business comes under those categories, and in those cases Standing Order 92 gives Synod members the power to object to the Business Committee's designation. But if the bishops or Archbishops decide to approve or commend liturgy under Canon B 4 or B 5, the Synod has no formal role in

such a decision and therefore the Standing Orders cannot give Synod members a right to challenge such a decision. Indeed, it will be *ultra vires* (meaning outside their powers) to do so, and thus unlawful for them to attempt to do so.

The House of Bishops has from time to time brought such liturgies to Synod, but the Standing Orders were not changed, they were not obliged to be, and the historical note which has been provided in the miscellaneous papers is interesting to read on the history of these things. Material can be brought by the House of Bishops if they wish for a take note debate, but only the House of Bishops can decide to bring this under Canon B 2. This can only be changed by amending the Canons. The effect of the amendment proposed by the Standing Orders Committee is merely to give clarification on that point, and I would encourage Synod to vote in favour of this amendment to give the Standing Orders greater clarity.

The Chair: Item 20 is now open for debate. The speech limit is three minutes, please.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford): My purpose in contributing to this debate is to persuade you to reject, at this juncture, the proposed amendment to the definition of “liturgical business” in Standing Order 78. The Standing Orders Committee justifies the amendment on the ground that it would not change the meaning - you have just heard that - of the phrase, only make it clearer.

However, even a cursory examination of what is proposed reveals that the amendment would fundamentally alter the meaning of the phrase “liturgical business”. It would do so in two respects. First, the amendment would bring about a change in the role of the Business Committee. The Business Committee’s role would be diminished. Under the current Standing Orders, the Business Committee has power to designate a service or other liturgical provision as subject to one or other of the procedures. If the Business Committee does designate the service or other liturgical provision as subject to one of the three procedures, the service must proceed as liturgical business within the Standing Orders.

If on the other hand, the amendment were passed, the Business Committee’s role would be diminished. Its role would be merely to determine which of the three procedures a service to be laid under Canon B 2 would be applicable procedure. That is significantly to diminish the powers of the Business Committee.

Secondly, the amendment would bring about a change in the meaning of the phrase, “liturgical business” where it appears 84 times in the Standing Orders. Under the current Standing Orders, the phrase means “a service or other liturgical provision which the Business Committee has designated as subject to one of the three procedures”. The liturgy is given its status of liturgical business by the Business Committee. That would be removed by the change.

So there are two aspects to the change: removing powers and restricting the meaning. If the proposal is not a change in substance then it does not need to be made now, and it can be looked at carefully. However, if the proposal would change the meaning of the phrase “liturgical business”, it is inappropriate to make the change at this time when the phrase is of material practical significance. It may impact upon motions in relation to the use of Canon B 4, Canon B 5 and Canon B 5A, brought to give respectability to the proposed use of those Canons. For these reasons, I invite you to reject this amendment, at this juncture.

The Chair: After Debbie Buggs, I will be proposing a motion for closure on the debate of this item.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Well, who am I to speak after such a distinguished King’s Counsel? However, please do vote against this proposal. You will have seen the briefing paper commissioned by the Liturgical Commission, entitled GS Misc 1359, snappily entitled The Recent Evolution of the Church of England’s Liturgical Procedures and Canons, B 1 to B 5A. The developments in the Canons and editions of the B 2 to B 5 articles have happened over several decades.

Alongside that, there have been revisions to the General Synod Standing Orders. You will see in that paper there was a major refinement to Standing Orders in 1994 which seemed to have thought that the current wording was satisfactory. As well as that historical point, Joyce Jones has already pointed out that the Business Committee does have considerable powers under Standing Order 91 to designate business as Article 7 business or Article 8 business.

So it does have powers, and I do feel that this change would diminish those. The Standing Orders Commission, in proposing this change, I think, is almost disempowering the democratically elected Business Committee. So please do vote against this change.

The Chair: I had not spotted you, Mr Scowen. Do please go ahead, and then we will see where we are.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): It will not surprise you to know I am a member of the Standing Orders Committee. I have the misfortune to disagree on this occasion with my friends Stephen Hofmeyr and Debbie Buggs, with whom I agree on almost everything else, but on this occasion, I am afraid I think, dare I say it, that they have got the wrong end of the stick.

The very nature of the way our Canons for anything to with liturgy are constructed means that the only form of liturgical approval in which this Synod has any enacting role is B 2. None of the other ways of permitting or authorizing liturgy requires any involvement of this Synod at all. Now, on this occasion, as we know, the House of Bishops has brought

an amendment that we are going to be looking at shortly, a motion rather, to ask our view, but it does not have to.

The only place where this Synod has that formal role to approve liturgy is under B 2. That is what liturgical business has to mean in the Standing Orders because otherwise it would make no sense. And that is why I believe, along with Joyce Jones, that what the Standing Orders Committee is proposing is simply to clarify that which is unclear.

And yes, Standing Order 78 is not well-worded at the moment, which is why we have got a problem and why it has been misunderstood. Of course, when you have words that are not as clear as they should be, there is always room - especially for the lawyers among us, like me - to argue different cases as to what those words mean.

But I suggest that in the overall context, not only of the Standing Orders, but of the Canons which regulate the approval of liturgy, this can only mean what this amendment now makes clear that it means. The Business Committee, yes it does have a role, but that role is to decide which of three alternative routes is to be followed when liturgical business is brought by the bishops, and we are now making that clear so there is no longer any room for misunderstanding. So, I do urge the Synod to vote for the amendment that the Standing Orders Committee is proposing.

The Chair: I now invite Joyce Jones to reply to that debate on Item 20.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): Clive Scowen has already represented the view of the Standing Orders Committee in reply to Stephen Hofmeyr. The Standing Order Committee's view is that he is wrong about what he says, that this amendment does not change the role of the Business Committee because the Business Committee's role in deciding the procedure to be operated only comes into effect once the bishops have brought the liturgical business for First Consideration, and it does not change the role of the Business Committee at all in this respect.

In reply to Debbie Buggs, again, the Standing Orders obviously are not clear because there is confusion in them, so they need to be made clearer. Standing Order 91 is not relevant because we are not talking about Article 7 or Article 8 business in this case, we are only talking about business which is brought by the bishops under Canon B 2. And thank you to Clive Scowen for his speech, that represents the view of the Standing Orders Committee.

The Chair: We now put Item 20 to the vote.

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

The Chair: Synod, we now turn to a couple of standalone amendments. You will find these on page 4 of the yellow Order Paper. The amendments, the two items, 29 and 30, will be taken separately.

We will begin with Item 29, I therefore now call on Debbie Buggs to speak to and move her amendment, 29. You have up to five minutes, Debbie.

ITEM 29

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): This addition to Standing Orders would mean that any form of service to do with *Living in Love and Faith* would be treated as liturgical business and would therefore empower us, members of General Synod, to request expert and deep scrutiny and engagement, and we would, of course, get the full advice presented to us.

I realise that this relates to a specific business item, which is slightly unusual, but do not worry about that. We can delete this text in a few years' time when it is no longer needed. It is compatible with the Canons, as it is clear that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* represent a change in doctrine, otherwise there would not be such sharp division here in the chamber that you have seen already in this group of sessions. They therefore need the level of scrutiny provided for under B 2 business.

This Synod is constituted as a legislative assembly. Further, the Business Committee has considerable powers to designate business as Article 7 business under Standing Order 91, which is getting a lot of references this afternoon. I am sure that careful communication between the House of Bishops and the Business Committee will enable any constitutional requirements to be overcome if there are problems, or to be met quite easily. So please, firstly, do stand in a moment to allow this item to be debated and then please do vote for Item 29.

The Chair: Under Standing Order 127 I now call back Canon Joyce Jones to see whether she, as the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, on their behalf, wishes the debate on Debbie Buggs's amendment to continue.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): The Standing Orders Committee does not wish the debate on the amendment to continue.

The Chair: In which case, in order for the debate to continue, I would need 25 members to indicate that they wish that to take place. I believe there are more than 25 of you, so the debate will continue. Item 29 is now open for debate.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): I am speaking against this amendment. Friends, I was preaching on Remembrance Sunday to a very big congregation, and I happened to reflect on the rather great tendency in our country at the moment for Remembrance Sunday to be politicised by one group or another to serve an aim beyond the purpose of the day, and I felt that this was a regrettable development.

It seems to me that Debbie's amendment is exactly the same, because just as Remembrance Sunday belongs to us all, so do the Standing Orders, and any attempt to use them in this partisan and narrow way seems to defeat the object of their being there, which is to facilitate the smooth transition of our business.

It would be very easy for us to start proposing amendments to Standing Orders that would enable us to have a go at each other, so I could theoretically propose a change to Standing Orders that said that anyone who was a member of a PCC who voted not to accept the jurisdiction of their own bishop but to accept ordinations from a province or a church outside of the Church of England should no longer be a member of this Synod, but that would be partisan, it would be inappropriate for a debate, even though there are members here who have taken that decision.

It would be quite inappropriate to do that. It would be entirely appropriate to do it by a Private Member's Motion. So I ask you, let us stop this game, we saw it a lot in February, where we had gravamina and all other sorts of tactics to try and divert the direction in which the majority of this Synod, I believe, wish to go. I had not intended to speak, I certainly am not intending to speak later on this afternoon unless something strange goes on, but this seems to be my own useful contribution to seeing off these rather foolish attempts to subvert Synod's processes.

Ms Sammi Tooze (York): Synod, I urge you to resist this amendment. The proposal to amend the Standing Orders so that any forms of service emerging from LLF are automatically deemed to be liturgical business is misleading, since, if it were passed, the House of Bishops could still commend a form of service under Canon B 5 without any reference to Synod, and the Convocations and the Archbishops would still be able to authorize forms of service within their jurisdictions under Canon B 4

If forms of service intended for future authorization were presented to Synod, they would either be under consideration for authorization under Canon B 4, or intentionally under Canon B 2. This change to the Standing Orders therefore does not make any sense, since it imposes stringent procedures which could easily be circumvented by the House of Bishops, bringing into question the mutually supportive and collaborative relationships between the House of Bishops and the other Houses of Synod.

To insist that the House of Bishops share specific material through this amendment is to set an unhelpful precedent which would waste synodical time in the future. Just as liturgical business is properly introduced by bishops as the principal ministers of word and sacrament, so we should trust that they have the ability to do so to submit that business for Final Approval.

This amendment would create a huge amount of unnecessary work, wasting synodical time, energy and financial resources, as well as not being aligned with the final motion that we agreed in February. It also strikes me that it is inappropriate for any particular item of business to be named in the Standing Orders, singled out and setting it in an

inequality against all synodical work. Therefore, I urge you to reject this amendment, in order for us to continue the pathway that we all agreed in February without unnecessary obstacles and delays.

The Rt Worshipful Peter Collier KC (ex officio): I resist this amendment because I agree with and endorse what is set out in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the Standing Orders Committee report, namely that this is realistically outside our powers, and there are two reasons, they say.

First, the Canons, which provide the basic law of the Church, and second, the constitution of this Synod, which sets out what we can and so, by implication, cannot do. The Canons, as we have already been told, set out in section (b) the various forms of divine service, how they are authorized and the routes by that which is done.

Secondly, the constitution provides in Article 6 two principal things that we are here for. One is to make legal provision through Measures and Canons, and that includes authorizing forms of service. The other principal thing that Synod can do is consider and express an opinion on matters of religious or public interest, and perhaps there is no greater subject at the moment than that which we shall be discussing shortly.

And currently, the LLF debate falls into the second of those roles because we are not, at the moment, looking to make legal provision either by Measure or by altering the Canons. This amendment would seek to say that any matters, any consideration of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* must be deemed liturgical business, which would mean we could no longer consider and express our views on these as matters of religious and public interest.

We could only decide whether to approve them or not, under Canon B 2. And that would put the Standing Orders at complete odds with our constitution. It is also an attempt to effectively amend the Canons without expressly doing so. It is saying that, if Synod is asked for an opinion about the possible authorization or use of *Prayers of Love and Faith* under Canons B 4 or 5, they must nevertheless go down the B 2 route.

So you are trying to effectively say that the authorization under Canon B 4 or use under Canon B 5 requires Synod approval, which it clearly does not. So I have to advise you that this amendment is beyond our powers as a Synod. It is unlawful. In short, because we cannot do it, we should not do it.

The Chair: Synod, I am conscious of time. We have had three speakers against this amendment, I am just wondering is there anybody who wishes to speak for that before I invite Debbie Buggs to reply. Okay, thank you. Debbie Buggs, please do reply. You have up to three minutes.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Thank you for your contributions. I am sure our lawyers are capable of helping us through this, I know that it is a novel approach. I will not mention

all the speeches made. Sammi, I am impressed with your trust in the House of Bishops, I am afraid that is not a widely held trust at the moment.

And this amendment helps to go some way to restore power to us, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity, so, I do urge you to accept it, please.

The Chair: I now put Item 29 to the vote.

The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby): Point of order.

The Chair: Point of order.

The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby): Given the importance of this item to the next item we are discussing, and given that Debbie herself has recognised its importance, can I ask if you would be minded to discern the mind of the Synod with a counted vote by houses, please?

The Chair: I would need to see 25 members indicating that they agree and would like a counted vote by houses. There are 25, so we will. I order a counted vote by houses on Item 29.

The vote on Item 29: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 1, against 34, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 22 in favour, 124 against, with 31 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 36 in favour, 123 against, with 25 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 30

The Chair: Synod, we now have about six-and-a-half minutes, so I am in your hands as we begin Item 30. Debbie Buggs, I now call upon you to speak to and move your amendment, Item 30. You have up to five minutes, but then we would run out of time.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): It is great to be able to welcome representatives from the worldwide Anglican Communion to join us at General Synod. We benefit from their insights and perspective. Currently, they can speak but cannot vote. Changing the Standing Order 120 A to allow them to call for items to be designated business would mean that our critical friends can tell us clearly when they think we need to stop, reflect, think and scrutinise further, and this what I am asking us to vote for on this item.

The Chair: Under Standing Order 127, I now call back Canon Joyce Jones to see whether you wish the debate to continue on this amendment.

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Leeds): The Standing Order Committee does not wish the debate to continue. This amendment would give people who are not members of Synod, Anglican Communion members, who are observers, who have no voting rights, greater powers than Synod members themselves. There are also different people on each occasion, of course, and as you will have seen from our Report, we consider that there is no *vires* or legal power of Synod to give a power to someone who is not a member of Synod to do this. So, we resist the debate.

The Chair: In order for the debate to continue, I will need to see 25 members indicating that they wish for it to continue. I do not. The debate then does not continue, and lapses.

That concludes this item of business. No, it does not. Apologies, I now put Item 30 to the vote. We will do this by a show of hands and green ticks. Oh, sorry, it lapsed. Oh, we were doing well. We were right the first time. That concludes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 3.30 pm

ITEM 7

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH (GS 2328)

The Chair: Members of Synod, the absence of chocolate has been noted, so I have brought my own. Now, members of Synod, we return to a topic which is familiar to all of us, on which the vast majority of us have probably expressed our views in many votes.

As the Chair, who must remain neutral at all times, it is probably appropriate that I should record that in February, I did not vote on any of the amendments or the amended motion, and that I will not do so in relation to this motion or any of the amendments. And a reading of the Standing Orders will confirm that the Chair does not have any casting vote.

Now, as Quentin Letts observed in an article in *The Times*, the morning after our final vote in February, disagreement amongst us was real, but what I particularly noted from his musings was that he concluded his article in the following words: "As a rural parishioner who likes Cranmer's Matins and muscular hymns, I had arrived expecting to be embarrassed by my Church. I left rather proud of the daft old thing".

I can but hope, if Mr Letts is with us again in the public gallery, and he writes another article about this current debate, that he will be able to report on these proceedings today and tomorrow with the same degree of positivity.

Some ground rules before we start. First, this is likely to be an uncomfortable 24 hours for us all, when we might be tempted to say things which we later regret. So, please remember that the words we use when speaking to each other do matter, and how we choose to express them matters just as much. And although emotions may be tempted

to run high, we must, and I emphasise the word must, behave with decency, kindness and love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, who may not share our own views.

Secondly, as you will have seen from Notice Paper 9, I have had to consider the role of Standing Order 25 in relation to the main motion, and that Notice Paper gives the determination which I am required to give, as Chair, and my reasons. I have also had to consider whether Standing Order 25 has any materiality in relation to any of the amendments, and I have concluded that in each case it does not.

For the avoidance of doubt, I have also considered Standing Order 28, which provides that an amendment must be framed so as to form a proposition which is intelligible. And I have concluded that I do not need to take any action on that.

Thirdly, the order in which the amendments are taken is as they strike the text and thereafter, since a large number of them strike the text at the same point, pursuant to Standing Order 29(1), I am required to decide the order in which they appear on the Order Paper and will be debated, and I bear the sole responsibility for that.

Fourthly, since everybody is likely to be here when voting takes place, I will dispense with the need for ringing the bell, save for the final vote. So you need to make sure that you have your voting card and a handset before we start to vote on the amendments.

Fifthly, unhappily, the requirements of my bladder have not changed. I would like to say I am waiting for the operation, but that is not true. So we will have to have breaks during the debates. Of course, unlike me, members are free to drink coffee in the coffee room while the debate continues. I hope to have a break at about 5 o'clock.

Finally, before agreeing to chair this debate, I asked my long-suffering wife whether it was wise for me to do so. Apart from her reminding me that I was old and that I had retired some time ago, her response could be summarised thus: you like all that Standing Order stuff, and deep down, I know that you enjoy it, so go for it. So, thank you, dear wife. please, please, do not let the way in which this matter is debated cause me to regret my decision.

So let us now proceed. The plan is very much as it was last time, in February. We will hear from the mover of the main motion for up to 10 minutes. I will then look for five or six speeches of about five minutes, or up to five minutes, we will then go through the amendments and the order in which they appear on the Order Paper, during which time the speech limit will thereafter be three minutes, including speeches on amendments.

And having gone through the amendments, we will finally, whenever, conclude with a final series of speeches on the motion, either amended or unamended, before the Bishop replies to the debate. So, without further ado, I call the Bishop of London to speak to and move the motion standing in her name. You have up to 10 minutes.

ITEM 7 LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): I have, over the last three-and-a-half years, found myself asking, what am I doing here? It is a question that God asked Elijah, after Elijah feared for his life, he fled and came to the cave where he spent the night. The Word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered: “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life to take it away”.

Elijah was told to go and stand on the mountain, because the Lord was about to pass by, and of course we know the story. God was not in the wind, he was not in the earthquake or in the fire, but in the sound of sheer silence.

Synod, what if we were to believe that God is not in the wind, the fire or the earthquake, but in the sound of sheer silence. Elijah knew that God was surely in that place as Jacob before him, who dreamed of angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth, and awoke and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place”. That continues to be my belief, that God is in this place.

In presenting the motion to General Synod in February, the House of Bishops recognised the profound disagreement that exists across the Church of England, disagreement about sexuality persists within our Church communities, between our churches, among our clergy, our lay leaders, as well as among 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 winds of culture.

The *Living in Love and Faith* resources illustrate the fact that this is absolutely not the case. People have read Scriptures seriously and find a difference of meaning. There are those who believe that our unity as Christians depends upon our agreement on certain doctrinal issues, including those around sexuality and sexual intimacy. Then there are those who believe that unity is possible and desirable even if we disagree. Both of these approaches can be argued from Scripture.

The House of Bishops has been seeking a space where we believe God is calling us to live with our current disagreement. The Church of England has always been intentionally and uniquely a broad church. During the debates at General Synod in February, the Bishops were criticised for not showing our theological working out when offering the response to *Living in Love and Faith*.

Of course, the LLF resources themselves were part of that theological exploration, not just the course and the story of films, but the book, the podcasts, the online library which has been developed during the last six years. All of these theological resources underpin our work. All of them can still be found via the LLF Learning Hub. However, we have in paper GS 2328 tried to expand the theological and legal foundation on which we are building our work.

We have seen theology in dialogue with legal opinion. You may not agree with our theology or our legal advice, but we have not, as some have suggested, sought to use legal opinion to justify what is not right. We have, with integrity, sought to listen to God and to discern a way forward where we do not agree.

The conversations have brought to the surface the deep differences and disagreements which have always been present, which until now maybe we have avoided. It has been, and still is, deeply painful as a process. People have red lines, which, if they are crossed by other people, call for judgment.

Stephen Cox, a priest in the Diocese of Guildford has written a remarkable book called *Navigating by the Son*. He holds what some might call a conservative view on sexuality, and his son is gay and partnered. So Stephen has been challenged to ask himself how to hold a particular view with integrity whilst allowing other people the space to hold theirs and to live their lives by a different understanding.

Stephen says “If we do not read all Scripture through the lens that is Jesus, we will inevitably colour our vision with the tinted spectacles of our own personality, culture and world view, which may not be as Christ-like as we thought. This should alert us to the necessary humility of approaching others with whom we disagree and in asserting our own opinions, a humility that Jesus modelled for us. It means that to see the truth, we need to see each other, and especially we need those who are followers of Jesus while being radically different from us”.

So, if an excess of prophetic zeal leads us to want to exclude, silence, traduce or hate our opponents, perhaps we should meditate on the fact that Jesus rebuked his disciples when they wanted to call down fire on the heads of those who opposed them. When we are tempted, in an excess of zeal that outstrips love, to try to bully other people into life changes that we know will be good for them, perhaps we need to recollect how Jesus never coerced, never manipulated, and perhaps we should reflect that, while Jesus undoubtedly has an agenda of transformation for them, it might not include making them more like us.

It is my firm belief that, to take this approach, does not dumb down our understanding of Scripture or theology. On the contrary, it enriches it deeply. It also requires us to believe that there is a space where we can live together as a Church. So, Synod, as we prepare to debate this motion, I return to my reflections at the beginning of our informal discussions on Monday afternoon.

For some, what was agreed felt like a meteorite, for others it was the crumbs under the table. It may well be that, in seeking to repair the damage from which some fear was the meteorite, we are now sweeping away the few crumbs which had been offered.

Our unity does not come from our commonality, it comes from Christ. The image of the body reminds us that each part of the body needs to be motivated by charitable love, seeking the health of the body rather than the glory of one part, for there is no more excellent way. We need, I believe, to resist, those who wish to separate themselves or others from the body.

We live in a body which is messy, with its sacrificial compromise and failure to be what we are called to be. But God has chosen to work through that body, through us, to love the world He saved. We do not agree, but being part of the Body of Christ teaches us that love is patient, love is kind, it is not arrogant or rude, it does not insist on its own way, it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

The world needs better examples of dealing with difference, disagreement and resentment. I still want to believe that this may be the gift of the Church to the world. Surely God is in this place. I move the motion.

The Chair: There is a five minute speech limit. This matter is open for debate, there is a five minute speech limit initially. I will call the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): There is nothing new about division within the Church of God, including that part which is the Church of England. Indeed, since the days of the Apostles and the writing of the New Testament, a large proportion of the Epistles and subsequent writing is about dealing with differences. By the time we get to 1 John, there were numerous threats to the unity of the Church. Yet that Epistle, like those before and after, brings an order to the questions that face the Church.

A first question is about identity, and a second is about actions. The Church is first, foremost and finally those who confess with their mouth and believe in their hearts that Jesus is Lord, Romans 10:9. John's very similar creed is similarly simple: to confess that Jesus comes from the Father and to obey His commandments, which, in the context of 1 John, are to love our sisters and brothers.

The consequent actions are the commandments that Jesus sets out in his final speeches and prayer in John 13:17, love one another, wash feet, that is serve one another. The Church is distinct by its unity of love. The world will know we are Christians by our love, not our unanimity of thought. Holiness is to imitate God, 1 Peter 1:15, and that is where we become different to the world around us, when we love not only those like us, but those who are most unlike us, whether in idea or in any other way.

And it is too hard, we fail. Our infectious culture of the age starts by categorising people by other forms of identity, and too often we join in and we feel that we must protect ourselves from other identities. But Christians all start with one foundation of identity, Jesus Christ, and how He knows who we are. And so we are children of God by God's call and choice, and all the other identities rest on that foundation. 1 John 3:23 and 4:15-21.

That is the challenge of God's Church today and of the General Synod in this era. What is our identity and what are its results? First results. Let us remember that we are all Christians brought together only entirely and in no other way but by grace. I have not heard any reason in any of the innumerable meetings I have been to, or the innumerable letters, emails and other forms of communication that I have received, to think anything other than that we have different understandings of how our shared identity in the Lord Jesus Christ should be lived in holiness, vocation and action.

All those understandings held with deep passion and sincerity after profound prayer, biblical and theological study and love for God. Do they meet John's test? Do they meet Paul's test? Do they confess with their mouth and believe in their heart that Jesus is Lord? Do they believe Jesus is from the Father?

It is not for me to judge the hearts that only can be seen by God, and until that point when all things are revealed in the final judgment, if they claim identity with Christ, if someone else, a brother or sister claims an identity in Christ, they are my sister and brother in Christ, and to be loved, not to be expected to leave and go somewhere else, because they are included in God's economy and they remain sisters and brothers, even if they differ deeply and on important matters.

Secondly, as a consequence of that, we are in our discussions to assume the best from what we hear from others, to give them the benefit of the doubt, even if they speak carelessly. This is a process of long-term discernment amongst those not of two but of many views across a wide range. It is in our being curious about the others' views, in being present to each other, as all belonging to Christ and together in reimagining our way forward, that we show the world the family nature of Christ's Church and His unutterable, unlimited, extraordinary grace, with which we are loved.

The Chair: I have decided to try and do something slightly different this time on the basis that, having heard the Archbishop and the Bishop of London, I thought we should go to voices which have not been expressed so far in this Synod, so I am going to choose six maiden speakers, because they offer a new voice.

And first of all, I have called Julie Withers. Secondly, Richard Brown, is he standing? Yes, followed by Richard Brown. Up to five minutes.

Ms Julie Withers (Chester): I am a licensed lay minister, a Reader. I preach and teach and try to support other Christians in their faith journey. I want to thank the House and College of Bishops for their work in wrestling with the LLF project. As someone who has been a part of, and is committed to, the LLF process, I understand the time and personal cost involved.

I was married in June this year. Even though I am known to and, I think, on good terms with, my bishops, when I married I did not know if I would be permitted to carry on my licensed ministry. The uncertainty caused anxiety. I was fearful that I may lose my licence.

My wife and I had been together for 20 years. We were already totally committed to one another, but felt we should marry. My licence has always felt vulnerable, dependent on the approach, views and convictions of my bishop and incumbent. Yet it felt even more perilous the moment Alice and I decided to marry. How can that positive, happy action put my ministry in jeopardy? But how much more so do the lives and ministries of ordinands, ordained and licensed colleagues remain horribly uncertain until the *Pastoral Guidance* is issued.

At least my home, income and pension is not at risk, unlike ordained colleagues. So I support the motion brought, but I do urge the College and House of Bishops and Ministry Division to do everything possible to take away the uncertainty and postcode or bishop's lottery to enable the Church's ministers to focus wholeheartedly on their vocation and mission.

You have that ability, that discretion, that power. Please do not prevent the ministry of those God has called and gifted. In Matthew Chapter 7 we read “You will know them by their fruits, a good tree cannot produce bad fruit”. You will know us by the fruits of our ministries. So please, bring part 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance*, relevant to licensed and ordained ministry, forward as a matter of urgency. Please try to bring it to February Synod. But I support the motion from the Bishop.

Mr Richard Brown (Chelmsford): I was wondering, as we have heard, whether this thing goes up and down, but I have not discovered the way to do it yet. Brothers and sisters of Synod, I was elected to this Synod on the exact day of my 74th birthday, and exactly eight days later, in a church about a mile away from my home, a Member of Parliament, a man of deep Christian faith and one of the most popular men in town - that is something you do not hear very often in the same sentence - was stabbed seventeen times by a Muslim fanatic, who probably expected to be blasted into heaven in a hail of machine gun bullets. He was not, and he will spend a lot of, if not all of the rest of his life in an English jail.

Sir David Amess died doing the thing he liked best, representing the people who had elected him many times into Parliament. And when I, like Bishop Sarah, wonder what I am doing here today, I have to tell myself that I am not representing the bishops, who seem to have a great deal of power, I have noticed, I am not representing the clergy, I am representing the laity. I am representing the several hundred thousand people, members of this Church, many of them having really no idea of what we do here, the 98%, the paying membership of this Church, and those without whose time and talents and especially money, there would be no Church to talk about.

So I am trying to come here today to tell you what the laity are telling me, and perhaps they are telling you the same thing as well. They are not here, not invited here, to tell you these things themselves. They mostly get to know what happens in our Church from various press releases and the media. They ask me why same-sex marriage is being imposed on the Church of England. I say, it is not same-sex marriage, it is blessings, okay?

If it is blessings, what are the blessings? Well, I say there are the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, there are 30 pages of them, there is rubric to put them into services. “Oh”, they say, “You mean it’s liturgy?” “No, it’s not liturgy”, I say, “It’s blessings”. So, their conclusion from that is we are looking at marriage that is not marriage using liturgy that is not liturgy. I wonder how you think these things play out with very large numbers people in the Church of England. And to that I add, “Yes, and they are not, in my opinion, using the proper processes of Synod either”. I understand a bit more about that now.

Things very much resembling same-sex marriage will have happened, we believe, in Anglican churches (strictly on Sunday mornings of course). Appropriate publicity will accompany all this and a much deeper split in the Anglican Communion will have occurred. By then, will we care in 2025 what all this is about? I hesitate to say this is getting on for two years longer, but it looks like it is.

And it will cause damage, damage that arises not from the law of unintended consequences, because we know what the consequences will be, the same as in every other denomination and part of the Anglican Communion which has bent its processes and theology to suit the secular morality of the 21st century: slow and inevitable decline. There are now fewer members in the US Episcopal Church than there are Jehovah's Witnesses. The Anglican Church of Canada is, on its own admission, losing 10% of its membership annually, and also the Church in Wales. These are changes that will happen. People will drift off, people will go away. And we say all these things at the same time as we bemoan the fact that people do not come to our churches, we are losing money, dioceses are having financial problems.

Has anybody tried to sell you on the missional value of PLF, how by offering same-sex marriage to the world people will come flocking to us? I do not think they have. In 2019, there were 48 same-sex marriages which happened in churches. If you were lucky, there was one near you. Are we wasting this time, brothers and sisters? Are we wrangling about a couple of dozen same-sex marriages per year? Perhaps we can get back to some really important stuff.

If we vote against this motion we can kill it here and now and not be the turkeys who vote for Christmas. I beg you, brothers and sisters, to oppose this motion.

The Revd Jody Stowell (London): I warmly support this motion because I am an Evangelical Anglican Christian. My whole life, as a child, as a teenager, and as an adult, I have known the call deep within my soul to work for things to be fair, for justice, for righteousness. I made a commitment to follow Christ in my teens in a typical evangelical way of doing that, by praying a prayer of commitment, and I had an immediate sense of peace and joy. I also had a framework for understanding this passion for justice, this way that I feel God made me. I knew that this was God's call: to speak for truth, to call on the Church to be courageous, to see the face of God in everyone, perhaps especially in those who find themselves on the outside for whatever reason.

My particularly Evangelical Anglican Christianity has been the backbone of this framework in all my Christian journey. When it comes to supporting the move to bring *Prayers of Love and Faith* to the life of the Church and her people, I cannot see it as anything other than the just, right, fair, merciful compassionate action of God's spirit. Because this is what I see in Scripture. The God who again and again sits with the outsider, sits with those who have been told, often by the religious leaders (of Jesus's time and sometimes now) that God does not favour them "because they are ..." insert your own words. In

Jesus's time it was the women, those who had disabilities, those who found themselves in poverty, gentiles. Who is it now?

Scripture seems to me absolutely clear. There is a golden thread that these are the places and these are the people where God is to be found. And not only that, that it is from those places and these people, that genealogy, with those people named in them, it is from them from whence God comes.

One of my favourite liturgical prayers is the Pentecost commission. One of the prayers there says, "Will you pray for one another until your hearts beat with the longings of God?" I believe that this motion is in rhythm with the longings of God, with God's heartbeat. I ask for more, as Julie mentioned, but I think we are in the right rhythm if we support this motion.

Synod, I believe the Lord is singing a new ancient song, and I invite you to come and sing it, too.

Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford): I support the motion but I am saddened by the tone of the paper. We made a decision in February after lots and lots of debate, and the paper feels cautious to me, and perhaps far from the radical Christian inclusion that Justin has called for. In fact, talking about Justin, let me be clear, I do not want Justin to resign, I do not want to take him to court. My church does not want to stop paying the Parish Share and give my money to a group of trustees who will decide what to do with it. It saddens me that people are doing this. This is not the way of Christ.

We have not talked that much about Scripture. Andrew Cornes mentioned this yesterday. Well, let me have a go. I could say the sin of Sodom in Genesis 19 has nothing to do with homosexuality, see Ezekiel 16:49, it is about not helping the poor and needy. I could say we should not pick and mix from the Leviticus Holiness Code. I do not want to talk about not eating seafood or wearing its fibres. But it is sad, because that verse talks about putting to death gay men. Surely that is not right.

I could say why did Paul not use the commonly accepted word for homosexuality in Corinthians and Timothy instead of effectively making one up, which has caused havoc with translations? I could say Romans is all about the worship of idols and people moving away from their natural orientation rather than being true to it. In fact, all these references are in the context of some kind of abuse: homosexual rape, paederasty or temple prostitution. They do not refer to loving faithful committed same-sex relationships.

I could refer you to Jesus's statements on the subject but, that is right, we all know there aren't any. Augustine says that if your interpretation of the Scriptures does not increase your love for God and your neighbour then you need to go back and re-examine it. If members of the LGBTQ+ community are our neighbours, then I do not think we are showing them much love by use of the Scriptures. If anything, we have used them as a weapon.

Most weeks I hear from a gay Christian who has been accused of being sexually immoral, ignorant of the Scripture, and who has been told they are bound for hell. Well, that would be okay if they had a good support group and were confident about the Church supporting them, but that is rarely the case. They feel diminished, persecuted, unwanted and badly treated. This is not the way of Christ.

Let me end with a quote by someone from that community. "As someone who stepped away from the ordination journey due to the *Issues in Human Sexuality* and the documents associated with that, I can't help but rejoice at the proposals to remove this from the process. However, I can't believe that, after years of discussion, all of which have required queer people to be publicly vulnerable, sharing our trauma on pages, screens and conversations, we have ended back where we began".

Please can we stop inflicting pain on the LGBTQ+ community and please can we get back on track and recover our position as concluded in February? I support this motion.

Mr James Wilson (Manchester): Just a warning that my speech will touch on suicide and mental health breakdown. Part (a) of the motion we passed in February talked about lamenting and repenting of the harm that LGBTQI+ people have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church. To this end, PLF and replacing *Issues in Human Sexuality* are a start, although I share the disappointment of others on the slow progress being made on these. I believe we also need to look at what more we can do to turn these words about repentance into actions.

I started attending the church where I currently worship, St James & Emmanuel Didsbury, as it was coming to terms with the suicide of a member of the congregation, Lizzie Lowe. She was 14. In the inquest into her death a few months later, it came to light that, before she died, she was coming to terms with the fact she was gay and she did not believe that was compatible with her Christian faith. The response of the church's leadership to this tragedy was to become loudly and proudly inclusive of LGBTQ+ people and to endeavour to create an environment where everyone felt welcome, regardless of who they are and who they love.

While a number of people with conservative views left us at the outset, more have joined us, both LGBTQ people who have struggled to find a church of the tradition they are used to locally, who will accept them for who they are, and some straight people who just want to be able to invite gay friends to church without them being told "God loves you, but ...". Some who have studied the context of the three New Testament Scriptures just referred to, to sexual practices in the Roman Empire traditionally used against homosexuality, concluded they were not talking about committed monogamous same-sex relationships.

It has been suggested in this chamber that churches who are affirming are shrinking and dying. That could not be further from our experience at St James & Emmanuel. Polling and research, and, I am sure, for many of us, the conversations we have had, tell us that

perceptions of homophobia in the Church are off-putting to many people, especially young people who might otherwise be receptive to the Gospel. It is not that that they expect the Church - to steal a phrase - to compromise with culture. It is that they see a disconnect between the unconditional love of Christ that we preach and the “othering” of people because of their sexuality or gender identity.

As has just been cited, in Matthew 7 Jesus said, “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit; nor can a bad tree produce good fruit”. I have heard many stories of pain and hurt at the hands of the church from LGBTQ+ Christians who have joined our congregation over the last few years. For one friend, years of rejections at the hands of a series of churches and suppressing his sexuality, including attending support groups to lead the celibate life he was told God wanted him to lead, led to a mental health breakdown. Synod, this is not good fruit.

The word “repentance” implies turning around, and while I do not want to ask for more workstreams, and certainly do not want to see any further delay, in implementing what we agreed in February, it would sometimes be helpful if we were explicit about what exactly we are repenting of, and how the Church is going to do better in future, and put into practice the radical inclusion we talked about in February.

The Revd Neil Barber (Derby): This is my first speech at Synod. Thank you for calling me, Chair. My Synod number is 101. Room 101 is the torture chamber used by the Ministry of Love in George Orwell’s *1984* to break down the resistance of those with whom they are working. That feels to me what LLF has been doing: breaking down the resistance of faithful Anglicans in the name of love that is not love.

Room 101, via a television show, has become known as a place to consign things that are useless and unwanted. The watching world sees the PLF proposals and recognises that we are dumping our doctrine in Room 101, even though we assert that legally we are not. They know that we are not doing nothing. They see that we are changing doctrine.

There is no uncertainty. The Bible is clear. The Church’s doctrine on sex and marriage is clear. God modelled Holy Matrimony between a husband and a wife on the relationship between Christ himself and his bride, the Church. God decreed that sexual intimacy outside marriage is sin. What God has said is for all of our flourishing as his holy people. Consigning it to Room 101 would be to embrace sin, and that has eternal consequences.

Synod, on Sunday night I found myself preaching on Joshua 24. Joshua called God’s people then to choose: serve God or serve idols. Today, as God’s people, we must choose: serve God or serve idols. The Archbishop of Alexandria addressed us in February on behalf of the Global South. Archbishop Samy warned that the LLF proposals “threatened Anglican unity around the world”. He said the choice was ours. Today is our Joshua 24 moment. “Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve the Lord, but, if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

Synod, we so need a holy fear of God, for through Jesus, God redeems his people from sin to live a holy life. By his spirit and his grace he transforms us into the likeness of Jesus, to free from sin and to rescue others from sin; not to bless sin and encourage it. Jesus says, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other”.

There is a simple choice for each of us here today: each bishop, each Archbishop, each member of the clergy and each member of the laity. Jesus was clear. Joshua was clear. I am with them, and I implore you, Synod, to echo Joshua’s words, “But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord”.

The Revd William Pearson-Gee (Oxford): It pains me that I stand before you to challenge 44 of our Bishops who all swore an oath to uphold the teaching of the Church, but are now leading their flocks, bought with the blood of Christ, astray with them. We are being walked towards a cliff edge. We know it is not really about same-sex marriage. It is instead about the authority of Scripture.

In warm terms, Archbishop Stephen encourages us to strive for unity at all costs, to walk together, to live in our differences, in what I humbly submit is a misunderstanding of John 17. In that passage, Jesus was praying that the Church down the centuries might believe the same truths, obey the same teaching and look forward in the same hope as the apostolic church. That is unity: unity in the truth.

It is no easy thing to stand against the tide of Western culture, with the pressures of social media and political correctness waging against the ancient abiding text of God’s Word. I have been told by a fellow Synod member that when I teach the biblical view of marriage, I should be prosecuted for hate speech.

We all know the levels of trust between us and the House of Bishops is at an all-time low: broken assurances, still no completed suite of supporting paperwork, still no published legal advice. The Bishop of London says we are not changing the doctrine of marriage and that these Prayers are a pastoral response and, technically, she is probably correct. But I submit that this is loving, well-intentioned sophistry. We all know that blessings will be dressed up to be pretty much indistinguishable from marriage. We know what the trajectory is. The 44 Bishops who signed their letter have been clear on that. We all know that blessings are but the first step and, like getting your foot in the door, once authorized under B 5A, there will be no turning back.

Bishops swear to uphold the teaching of the Church, but the 44 and our Archbishops have failed. You are not even united on the basic issue of sex before marriage. Here am I encouraging my children to remain celibate until marriage, and you cannot even agree on whether I should be teaching them this, or, like the Bishop of Dover said, “All our kids are doing it, so it’s fine; get over it”. You have compromised with the world. The Church is a lifeboat. It should be in the sea, but when the sea gets into the lifeboat we are in trouble

and you have opened the stopcocks. Instead of allowing the Gospel to conform us, you are allowing the world to conform the Gospel, so that, as Paul writes prophetically, “For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather round them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want them to hear”.

Jayne Ozanne has said that the situation is irreconcilable, and I agree with her. 85% of the Anglican Communion no longer looks to Canterbury. The fabric of the Communion has been torn irretrievably, and that is a legacy of which we should all be deeply ashamed. This motion is akin to a tragic suicide note. Look at what has happened to the attendance figures in the Episcopal Church in the USA who are haemorrhaging people. You are leading the Church of England over a cliff, which is why we cannot walk together, and your exhortations are no use.

This is so controversial it has to be considered under B 2. You have done your best to get it over the line, but I am afraid we need to draw stumps on this. Now is the time for differentiation. We must part company into two distinct provinces or jurisdictions, and then progressives can be free to pursue whatever doctrinal innovations they feel led to pursue. I love you all, but we cannot walk together. We need to reconfigure so we can start talking about other issues like mission. Please do not vote for this motion.

The Chair: Apart from the Archbishop of Canterbury, all those were new voices which we have not heard in this Synod before, and we are grateful to all of them for making their maiden speeches.

ITEM 31

I am going to move to the amendments. I am going to call on the Bishop of Durham to move Item 31 standing in his name. He has up to three minutes.

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler): I would like to point out to Synod initially that Item 31 and Item 33 were put forward as one amendment for rewording the whole phrase. I fully understand and accept the Chair’s decision to take things in the order that they are, but it does mean that if 32 were to be passed, it would make 33 read slightly oddly, but we will come to that.

I think of the young woman who, in deep tears, said to me simply, “Bishop, it feels like our church is being stolen from us”. I think of the gay civil-partnered couple who told me that they were being treated like second-class citizens. I think of my friend who has dedicated themselves to a single celibate life because that is what they believe that God has called them to, who feels that their Church is now betraying them.

You will have many examples yourself of people who are being deeply hurt, from all sides, and all opinions. I feel pain about what we are about. But there are many who are being deeply hurt, which is more than simply feeling pain.

I simply propose this part of the amendment because I believe it is more truthful and honest and loving as a statement of where we are, and that is what lies behind this amendment. I move it.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond to this amendment.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Bishop Paul. I think that one of the things I have always struggled with is around how you enable people to understand. As a bishop, I have heard the deep hurt that people have experienced right across the breadth of the traditions and beliefs, and are experiencing, through our disagreement, through the way in which we have hurt the LGBTQ community, but also the way in which those who feel we are going too far feel deep pain. It is always difficult to find the words. Therefore, I am not going to resist this amendment.

The Chair: As the Bishop does not resist the amendment, the debate continues. Can I see those who would be against this amendment, please? You, sir.

Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter): I am not that against this amendment. Obviously, everybody feels a great level of distress over this whole process, myself included, but I think we have become very preoccupied with feelings which are hard to quantify and will be different for every person. Is it not more accurate to say that people feel hurt than to try to quantify that? We do not actually know how everybody feels.

The Chair: I am going to call Rebecca Mynett on Zoom.

Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans): When I was elected, I never imagined that my maiden speech would be on the theology of repentance, not least because I am a lowly lay Reader, but in speaking to this amendment I want to expand on what James Wilson said earlier in the debate, because repentance is central to the Gospel.

According to Matthew's Gospel, the first words Jesus said to the crowds is repent: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near". This comes shortly after his baptism and temptation. It seems, in reflecting on the implications of His baptismal experience, when He heard the voice of God saying, "You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased", Jesus had realised, in line with Deuteronomy 14:1, that all people are beloved children of God.

Throughout His ministry, we see Jesus acting on this by breaking the social taboos that separated the richly pure from the impure, preventing some people from experiencing the love of God as expressed through the wider community. All are beloved children of God and all are equally called to repentance.

I am a translator, and I am alert to the fact that this is a translation. Is “repent” a good translation of what Jesus may have said? No, it has been described, by Southern Baptists no less, as a linguistic and theological tragedy. As I am sure many of you know better than me, repentance, or “metanoia”, is about seeing things differently and about realising something. My admittedly rather free translation of Jesus’s words would be: “For God’s sake, realise we are all beloved children of God”. Jesus wants people to realise what He realised: everyone is a beloved child of God, including our LGBTQI+ siblings. That is why I supported the February motion, although, in my view, it did not go far enough.

I want to say a bit more about how we can truly repent. In her recent book on repentance and repair, Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg explains Maimonides’s five-step approach to repentance, and how it can bring transformative healing to both the harmed and those who have caused harm.

Synod, I want you to consider where we are in the process: (1) naming and owning the harm; (2) starting to change; (3) restitution and accepting consequences; (4) apology; and (5) making different choices.

In February, we claimed to lament and repent, and various people have named and owned some of the harm, but I think not all of it, and so I am grateful to Bishop Paul for bringing the amendment, recognising that people are still being deeply hurt by this process, especially our LGBTQI+ siblings. But this is only the first step. We need to press on with the change we have started, and I pray that we will continue to recognise all the harm that has been caused as the *Pastoral Guidance* continues to be developed. There is more to be done.

The Chair: Do I see anybody who wishes to speak against the amendment? I see nobody in the chamber wishing to speak against the amendment and I see nobody on Zoom who wishes to speak to the amendment, so, in those circumstances, I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 31 has been sufficiently debated. I put a motion for closure on this debate.

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

The Chair: I then move to amendment 31, and I put that to the vote.

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

ITEM 32

The Chair: We turn to Item 32. Mr Chamberlain, please.

The Ven. Malcolm Chamberlain (Sheffield): Synod, in bringing this amendment, my intention is not to criticise the House or College of Bishops, who have been working under

extraordinary pressure and pronouncements of judgment. Nevertheless, GS 2328 is disappointing in its limited progress.

Having listened carefully over six-and-a-half years of LLF, in February, the Bishops brought to this Synod a proposal that was endorsed in all three Houses. Since then, threats of legal action, breakaway structures and local disobedience have been all too prominent. Immediately after February's vote, I left this chamber and wept: tears not of jubilation, or even relief, but of intense sadness at what eight hours of debate had said to my daughter and to other LGBTQIA+ Christians in our Church and nation. That sadness continues.

It is disappointing that the radical new Christian inclusion which we set out to discover in 2017 is not even mentioned in 108 pages of GS 2328. It is disappointing that the practical evidence of repentance agreed in February is thin at best. Synod, it feels like the pastoral motivation behind LLF has been all but lost in legalities and threats.

GS 2328 states: "The Church is called to be a community seeking to discern God's faithful and holy love in action", echoing Archbishop Rowan Williams's description of mission as "seeing what God is doing and joining in".

Here is the thing: God is already blessing people in same-sex relationships, and, what is more, God is blessing the Church through their ministry. I have done a lot of listening - to Scripture, to different theologies and to LGBTQIA+ followers of Jesus, many of whom have described nearly walking away from the Church, and faith, because of how they were treated. But I have also heard a beautiful common thread in their testimonies, of how the love of Jesus held them in their faith. In many cases, the faith of a same-sex partner was also significant. Thank God that the Holy Spirit is not waiting for the Church to catch up, but I still pray that we will, and at a faster rate.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to take up our cross, but we are also assured by Jesus that His yoke is easy and His burden light. Eugene Peterson translated Jesus's words in Matthew 11 as: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Walk with me and work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you".

Synod, how our Church needs to rediscover those unforced rhythms of grace, as we look to the example of Jesus and join in with what God is already doing. I move the amendment standing in my name.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Malcolm, and I understand why some in Synod will feel disappointed around the progress that has been made, but, at the same time, there will some in Synod who are alarmed at the progress that has been made. As I have already said, it is a period of uncertainty and

we are seeking to provide pastoral provision, and so I would resist this amendment because, while I know some will see it as limited, others will not, and, in a sense, what we are seeking to do is to recognise the work that has been done since February.

The Chair: As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and a vote to be taken on the amendment. I now invite members to stand in their places. I see 25 members standing, so the debate continues. Those who want to speak in favour of the amendment, please show.

Mr Kenson Li (UKME co-opted): Thank you, Chair, for calling me to speak. In our debate so far, change has been described by some as “unorthodox”, “heretical”, “unbiblical”, “unfaithful” even, but faith is not the concrete habit of mind, says Richard Hooker. It is saving trust. The visible continuity of the Church’s apostolic faith, faith in Christ’s salvation, is not found in the uncompromising adherence to a set of received precepts; it is found at the baptismal font and the altar. Baptism is a gift of our unique identity, and the Eucharist is always celebrated at God’s own table. The invitation is not ours to issue; the grace not ours to impart.

After engaging with the LLF process as a Church, we must, and we can, acknowledge that tradition can no longer be described as the embodiment of the unchangeable, but as growth, as life. Too often there is a graceless acceptance of Christian doctrines and a graceless battle against the destruction of evil in our institutions. Some continue to conflate the concepts of *fidus qua* with *fidus quae*, without acknowledging the damaging effects their fallible rhetoric has on countless lives.

We who advocate for inclusion are not so much seeking change but seeking ways of expressing our faith with integrity as we have received it, and it is, no wonder, part and parcel of a faith which has at its centre the life, death and resurrection of a man who healed the sick on the Sabbath, whose parable has a Samaritan as the righteous protagonist, whose witness and identity is the fullness of revelation; a revelation that undercuts all biblical fundamentalism, a revelation given first and foremost as a declaration of love.

Let us continue the conversations in the House of Bishops and beyond, but let us do so mistrusting the conclusions we had already made before we walked into this room. Let us not confine ourselves into camps wanting or not wanting change, but together, as one body, be open to the Spirit’s guidance in finding our place in that conversation which has continued ever since Jesus began to talk with those whom He met in Galilee; a conversation which is the life of the Church today. We must acknowledge the progress done is limited, and we have to do more, so please support the amendment and the main motion.

The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities and TEIs): Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Truro, the Bishop of Winchester, and the many others who have been involved in this process to get us to this point.

I have been involved in discussing matters of sexuality for something like 20 years, and at least for 10 years in the Church of England, back with the Pilling Report, for those of you who remember that stage, and I think we are just starting to get somewhere. As a theologian, I know that it takes the Church sometimes literally centuries to get where it needs to get. I do not think it is going to take us centuries, but it is okay to be patient and to take our time in order to do something right.

The reason why it feels like such frustratingly slow progress is that, for understandable reasons, so far we have said we are not going to change our doctrine, and yet GS 2328 is candid about the fact that marriage and sexual intimacy are doctrinal matters. So no wonder progressive LGBT+ people feel so hurt by being told that all that we can offer you at the moment are prayers of blessing of people, not of your relationships, because the relationships, by definition, fall short of what our doctrine says that we can bless.

Even though I am as conservative as they come - indeed more conservative than the Pope, apparently, who is quoted in GS 2328 - I think we have to continue this patient hard work and recognise that we have different doctrines, and therefore create doctrinal space for those who want more change whilst enabling those like me, who cannot see doctrinal change around marriage as a faithful development in doctrine, to continue to hold and to teach and to live in the way that we believe is right for us. I think that is the only way that we can be faithful to, and listen to, LGBT people across the spectrum of different convictions and views.

I hope we are worth that hard work, that money, that time. I know that we are worth that effort to God, and I trust and hope that we would be worth that ongoing patient work in the Church of England as well.

Dr Diana Tremayne (Leeds): I often feel like an outsider here, as someone who has spent a lot of time avoiding the Church because I did not fit in, or felt that I would not be able to be myself, although I am hugely grateful now to have found places to worship where I am known and loved as I am. However, I do occasionally wonder if being here at Synod is some kind of divine punishment for my previous avoidance.

Anyway, here I am, and, as someone who will have been in a loving and committed same-sex relationship for 30 years next year, I have been both disappointed and hurt by the limited progress since February, and by the tone of parts of GS 2328, although I appreciate the work that has gone into it.

I am also not sure that some of us have the same understanding of what the apology made in February meant. I am sorry to say this, but at times it is hard to feel comfortable

and safe in this place, knowing that some describe our relationships as sinful and detestable - and encourage others to do the same.

I am not a trained theologian, but I was struck recently by a discussion at an event I attended about the *Song of Songs*. As a teenager - an angst-ridden teenager - I was often drawn to Ecclesiastes when I was trying to make sense of life and faith, but next to it, I would also find myself reading the *Song of Songs* because it is so beautiful, poetic and joyful. It does not mention marriage, but the love between the couple shines out from its words. Many of us here are either in, or know people who are in, relationships where that love also shines through, and I hope that we can move forward to allow this love to be celebrated and affirmed by those churches who wish to do this.

I speak in favour of this amendment, and I hope others will vote for it.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford): I want to oppose this amendment as I do not think that there has been limited progress by the House of Bishops. On the contrary, the bishops have been falling over themselves in an almost Johnsonian desire to “get PLF done”. We see that in the omni-shambles of a process that the bishops have adopted to get PLF done.

First of all, controversial liturgy has always gone down the B 2 route, yet the bishops seem intent on using a trial period - something which is unprecedented. The bishops are pressing on at speed regardless.

Secondly, the February motion required the bishops to move forward only on the basis that the prayers could not be indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church. The bishops seem to have concluded that this is impossible, and they seem strangely reluctant to share the legal advice they have received. Indeed, they have conceded that probably standalone services would be indicative of a departure, and yet the bishops are pressing on at speed regardless.

Thirdly, the Archbishop of York promised back in February that he could only support the *Prayers of Love and Faith* when a full package of proposals on *Pastoral Guidance* and *Pastoral Reassurance* were presented. We do not have the *Pastoral Reassurance*, and the *Pastoral Guidance* is only partial. We are now told we are engaging in an iterative process, whatever that may mean.

The Chair: Are you speaking to the amendment?

The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford): I am, yes, and I will finish in a moment, if I may. The bishops are pressing on at speed regardless.

My point is that Synod should reject this amendment because there is no evidence that progress is limited. They are proceeding at speed in an egregious abuse of process. I urge Synod to oppose this amendment.

The Chair: I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 32 has been sufficiently debated. I am going to put a motion for closure on Item 32.

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

The Chair: Therefore I am going to put amendment 32 to the vote.

The Revd Mark Miller (Durham): Point of order. Sorry to interrupt, Chair. Given the nature and the gravity of some of these votes, please can we have a counted vote by Houses?

The Chair: We can have a counted vote by Houses if I see 25 people standing. And I do, so there will be a counted vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 32: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 1, against 22, with 13 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 78 in favour, 100 against, with 9 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 88 in favour, 104 against, with 9 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): Chair, I recall in the last period of debate one member mentioned the name of another member who has not yet spoken in the debate. Could you remind Synod members that, if they are going to do that, they should do the courtesy of informing that member before they do it under the relevant Standing Order?

The Chair: Mr Butler, there is no Standing Order which requires anybody to give notice. I think it is probably a common courtesy that they should do so, and I would encourage them from the Chair to do that, but there is no Standing Order requiring them to do that.

ITEM 33

The Chair: We move to Item 33. The Bishop of Durham to move Item 33, please.

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler): In a sense, we continue the previous debate a little bit around the term “progress made”. The intention of my amendment is to recognise that for some the progress has been very limited, and for others to describe what has happened as progress is inappropriate.

What my amendment seeks to do, therefore, is to take the heat out of the question of whether or not it is progress, but simply to recognise the amount of work and consultation that has been undertaken. It offers Synod an opportunity to simply recognise and accept that a huge amount of work and consultation has been undertaken. That, I believe, is

indisputable. Trust me - and I know that is a hard word to use - but trust me as a member of the House of Bishops, huge amounts of work have been undertaken and a huge amount of consultation has happened. So again, as with amendment 31, it is primarily trying to ensure that the motion reflects truthfully and lovingly the situation that has happened since February and where we stand now.

I therefore move the motion standing in my name.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond to Item 33

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Bishop Paul. I think I understand what you are seeking to do. Of course, progress is talking about movement towards. The truth is, in terms of a destination - apart from heaven - I think part of *Living in Love and Faith* has always been about listening. It has always been about listening to each other and listening to God. I guess that since 2017, whilst I think it has been difficult, I believe that I have seen the way in which the Church of England and Synod has changed the way that it has listened to each other. I also think that there have been steps taken to understand what homophobia looks like, and whilst we may not be there yet, I think there has been progress.

Synod agreed for us to take forward the motion as agreed in February. There has been work, and there has been consultation, but also there has been prayer. There has been discernment. We have waited on God. I think people have engaged in conversations which have been difficult. Whilst I understand you may want to take out the heat, in a sense, it is to underestimate, and even though they may have been some very small steps, I think we have in some way found a different way with *Living in Love and Faith* to begin to listen to each another even in the depths of our disagreement. So I would resist this amendment.

The Chair: Well, as the Bishop has not supported the amendment it will lapse unless 25 members stand or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate on the amendment to continue and a vote to be taken on the amendment. I invite members to stand in their places or otherwise indicate. Yes, there are and so the debate will continue.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): Point of order. I understand, Mr Chairman, from the staff in the tearoom that they are going to start packing away the tea things fairly shortly.

The Chair: Oh no, they are not.

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford): I gather that they are supposed to pack up at 5.00, but they are probably going to start packing up at 20 past. I thought you might like to know that, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: I would like to know that. Can I let you into a secret - and I always let you into secrets, you know that - I am going to have an adjournment after this debate has

concluded, but it does seem simpler to have this debate first. Perhaps somebody can tell the staff in the tearoom that I really do not want them to go yet, please. No, Archbishop, you do not need to do it. I am sorry. Come on, be serious.

Can I see those in favour of the amendment, please. I would like a couple of speeches for, and a couple of speeches against, all three minutes, or you could make it shorter. Those in favour of the amendment, please, and against the amendment.

Dr Rosalind Clarke (Lichfield): Synod, we have before us a set of sweeping amendments to this motion, and several of those clearly indicate that we do not all recognise that progress has been made in implementing February's motion. Neither those who were in favour of that motion nor, indeed, those opposed to it think that where we are now, as indicated in GS 2328, is adequate progress in providing what was promised by July nor, indeed, in guarding the doctrine of the Church. I think it has been roundly condemned in public from all directions.

As a Synod, we have heard regularly in our sessions over the year across a wide range of issues that there is a huge trust deficit with respect to the House of Bishops. GS 2328, as presented by the bishops together with the secret legal guidance, does nothing to build confidence that the bishops can be trusted with this matter. The reluctance to bring the *Prayers of Love and Faith* themselves for synodical approval suggests perhaps that bishops lack confidence in them. The fact that some bishops are proposing amendments to the motion that we gather comes from the House of Bishops, and that others have already used their privileged positions in this Synod to indicate their support of some of these amendments, makes it clear just how divided the bishops are, not only on the issue of same-sex relationships but also on the legal advice and the motion before us.

Synod, it is not progress to be presented with a motion that relies on legal advice most of us have not been allowed to see and which has divided those who have seen it. We, that is the Houses of Clergy and Laity, are being patronised and condescended to by the bishops. Let us amend this motion to make it clear we are no longer willing to let the bishops mark their own homework.

The Revd Ross Meikle (Oxford): I trust the bishops, all of a sudden. I am relatively new to Synod, and what has been interesting is that, over the last couple of times we have met, the bishops seem to have this wall where they were one unified group and they voted the same and they all seemed to stick to the party line and we complained about it and, now, there is not a party line. And it is wonderful. I thought yesterday's session where we had four bishops speaking theologically differently. They were all white men, and so in terms of diversity not great, but it was wonderful to have that theology diversity there.

Yes, we have got bishops who are dissenting and writing letters saying, "This is how we feel". There is so much more honesty coming from the House of Bishops now, and I think that is reflected in the word "progress" and the way the Bishop of London has spoken about their time together this year.

I think progress has been made. I come to Synod today feeling a lot safer and a lot more Zen about this session. As a gay Christian I maybe should not, but I am feeling a lot more comfortable because I think the bishops themselves are a lot more comfortable, maybe with each other and with their own positions. So I am against the amendment.

The Ven. Canon Sally Gaze (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): Thank you to Bishop Sarah for referring us to 1 Corinthians 13 earlier this afternoon. As we think about whether this is progress, or whether we just need to refer to it in more neutral terms as work, I want to think about what does progress look like. For me, progress is does it help us to fulfil our commandments to love one another? Is that what this motion will do for us? Is it going to help us to love one another, the paper that we have seen? I do not think it does. I have tried very hard to put myself in the shoes of others as well as in my own view. From the point of view of LGBTQIA+ people who wish to marry in circumstances not currently allowed by our doctrine of marriage, it is not kind, in the way that love is kind, if kindness is about letting people do what they truly believe is right for them and their relationships.

But if I stand in the perspective of those who hold to the traditional doctrine of marriage, from this point of view it offers a gateway to a major change in the understanding of relationships which will not be for the good of individuals or society as a whole as we understand good. It gives no idea of how that may play out in the future and how the doctrine of marriage will be protected. Is it kind to young people and people working out their beliefs about the world for the first time? I do not think it is kind to them because it is not clear. Brené Brown said “clear is kind”, and I agree with her.

Love rejoices in the truth, but this process has seen the advocacy of a separation between the concepts of Holy Matrimony and marriage, and even between the concepts of doctrine and teaching. It recommends trying to hold together things that are contrary practices and theologies without any plan as to how we can make sure that power is used well in this circumstance.

We need to see that plan before we can be kind. This is not what love looks like, I do not think. It seems like the process behind the resolution has a lot to do with the fear of loss of unity and loss of influence, but I believe that our unity is founded in love and not in anything else. I believe that we can do better, and so I urge you to vote for this amendment.

The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham): Sorry to my own bishop, but I think it is really important to keep the very slight positive implications of the word “progress” in there. Before I was ordained, I was told by a youth worker colleague that I was destined to be alone because I was going to be ordained and, as a woman, that is just not attractive, plus obviously I was not going to change my name either - that was bad too. My sexuality was not even considered or asked about, and I kept silent. I had already avoided and wrestled with my call for over a decade, and I was done avoiding it, and so I chose my vocation over a relationship and stuffed that hurt away.

But, over time, I made progress and I realised what it means to be queer, and I made my peace with not fitting in the box, the liberation of seeing beyond gender and simply loving people as led by the heart. I had hated myself for far too long already because of the internalised shame I had absorbed from those around me about who I am, my personality, sexuality and mentality.

But Jesus showed me I am actually okay, and God was faithfully persistent with my call to the priesthood, queer as I am. I am still me, and I may never be as neat and tidy as tradition would like. I cannot betray that truth, and I long to see the LGBTQ+ community blessed to be fully themselves and shine like stars. We as a Church must accept that the attitudes and teaching we have long endorsed have caused, and are still causing, untold damage, allowing abuse and misery to be perpetuated. Can we stop that, please?

We all deserve better. We need to make progress. God has made us a wonderfully diverse and vibrant people and wants us to live, love and grow into that abundance. God has already called, loved and blessed hundreds of thousands of LGBT folk and continues to do so. Many of us know in our hearts that this is true. Praise the Lord that the Holy Spirit cannot be confined or defined by a box as Synod or the withholding of Parish Share. It is okay to be scared of change, I get that, and the unknown. But we do not go alone. That is important.

Love casts out fear, and our faith should be solid enough to take some shaking. We have delayed long enough. So many people now see the Church as irrelevant and out of touch, content with what they see to be sexist, racist, homophobic behaviour. They will not stand for it, and they have left. The very slight positive implication of the word “progress” I feel to be personally important, and it is important that we keep it. We have done enough delaying. I ask you to reject this amendment, and lots of the amendments that are seeking to delay it, and let us move forward together.

The Chair: Bearing in mind that the tearoom I think is still open, I wish to test the mind of the Synod as to whether this item, Item 33, has been sufficiently debated.

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

A Speaker: Point of order. Your bladder permitting, Chair, could we have a counted vote by Houses given the gravity of this issue?

The Chair: I do not think my bladder has got anything to do with a vote by Houses. I think that is very unfair to bring my bladder into this debate. I have only mentioned it a few times. Do I see 25 people standing? Yes, I do and so there will be a counted vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 33: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 11, against 23, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 95 in favour, 94 against, with 2 recorded

abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 101 in favour, 90 against, with 6 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chair: We are going to adjourn now and we will come back at 5.40, 20 to 6.

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, I have referred in the past to my hometown, Bolton, on a Saturday night and what it is like, and it is a bit like you lot, really, but there we are. In fact, if I tell you a secret, my daughter sent me a WhatsApp message this morning wishing me good luck, and she said, "I hope you keep the rabble under control". She has not got that language from me and I shall chastise her severely for it, although she is 40, but there we are. Are we all now settled? No Archbishops I see, but there we are.

ITEM 34

The Chair: We move to Item 34, Neil Patterson to speak to his amendment at 34. So, three minutes, Neil, okay.

The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford): Since February, I have participated in various parts of the evolution of the LLF proposals. From my experience there, I want to offer my sincere appreciation to all those who have worked at the core of the process: Bishop Sarah and the other LLF Bishops; Isabelle, Mark, Georgie and other staff; and there are others who have, unseen, contributed to the drafting and redrafting that has resulted in the paper we have today. It is not an easy path to tread amongst many pressures. However, I propose this amendment because I am deeply uneasy about the status that is given to the document GS 2328 by its inclusion in our motion today.

There is both a primary and a secondary reason for this. The primary reason is that I do not believe that GS 2328 fulfils the intention of our decision in February to open a wide space of pastoral and liturgical freedom within the existing and, by its nature, contested doctrine of marriage in the Church of England. Where the equivalent paper in February, GS 2289, acknowledged honestly the varieties of interpretation as legitimate, this seeks to shut them down in a legalistic manner. In particular, it seems to make assertions about the relationship between sexual activity and marriage which two amendments in February, 44 and 69, sought to assert, but which this Synod did not support. The amendment which was passed served only to confirm the starting point from which the bishops brought their paper in February.

The second reason though, which we have heard quite a lot about already, is about trust in our Church. Many of us will have read stories, accurate or otherwise, about the evolution of the paper through the College and House meetings in recent months and which have undermined the confidence that GS 2328 represents a properly constructed position from which to move forward. Inasmuch as there has been leaking, I suggest we

need to acknowledge that is a sign of a rickety system in which those participating do not have confidence in the processes to which they contribute.

This amendment is, therefore, an opportunity to let the House of Bishops move forward unencumbered by this difficult and ambiguous document to fulfil the changes for which we voted in February. I move the amendment standing in my name.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Neil, and I also would want to add my thanks to the staff who have supported us, particularly Matthew, Isabelle, Georgie, Bishop Mark, Mark and Alex, and also the House and the College, who have worked to bring these papers into this position. Thank you to them for all that they have done. I think that, in the introductory words, and in fact in the papers themselves, what we have described is as a House we have tried to seek to find that space in which we can find unity and the space that was shaped by the motion that was passed in February.

We have indicated that that has been a painful place as well as a place that at times has felt limited in doing it. Therefore, the papers that you have in front of you are, in a sense, pointing to where the House of Bishops is. The paper is very honest about our disagreement and our differences, and we are very transparent about that. I also think that there is much conversation about our theological foundation homework. We have provided a theological position. There are also questions about our legal advice that we have been given. Our legal foundation is in those papers. That is where it is. I recognise that there are some who will not agree with it, they will not be content, but in full transparency, those are the papers.

I would just comment that we cannot control what the media says about us. I have to say I think the reports in the media about the House and the College is much more exciting than what they are, but I have to resist this amendment because I do believe that GS 2328 provides for Synod the theological and legal foundation on the work and the progress that has been made.

The Chair: As the Bishop of London does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue on the amendment. I now invite members to stand in their places, or, if unable to do so, otherwise indicate. I do see 25 members standing and so the debate continues. Can we have contributions for the amendment, please, and against.

Mr Philip Baldwin (London): "God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him". There is no qualification to this verse, and I would hope that this General Synod is beyond questioning whether people of the same sex are capable of loving each other. The radical inclusion which many of us were led to believe might be the outcome

of the LLF process held out the hope of a Church fully owning, embracing and mirroring the radical love for all people exemplified by Jesus.

It was a privilege to be elected to General Synod in 2021. However, while I knew there would be a range of opinions expressed about gay Christians, I am frequently shocked by the lack of generosity shown by those opposing inclusion and the tone of GS 2328. It is not just un-Anglican. It is as if the Church I love has been hijacked. What we voted for in February was positive but felt like a bare minimum. To see this further diluted caused many of the people in the churches I represent, gay and straight, profound pain.

Gay Christians have listened to and tried to understand so-called conservative viewpoints, yet this has not been reciprocated. It is implied that I am sinful, heretical or not worthy of salvation. If this General Synod cannot see the irony of claiming to follow a saviour who went out of His way to embrace all without distinction, uplifting those who, for whatever reason, were shunned by the religious establishment and then perpetuating discrimination against gay people and their loving relationships, then it really does have a plank in its eye.

Christianity is not about repression, hypocrisy and denial. It is about generosity, compassion and love. I encourage General Synod members to vote in favour of this amendment and to provide a strong endorsement so that the Church can move in favour of a position which is more inclusive and which ultimately serves and celebrates LGBTQIA+ people.

The Revd Charlie Skrine (London): Like Neil, I have sat in many of the rooms discussing all this in the working groups and the invitation groups. Like Neil, I share the appreciation for Bishop Sarah's leadership on all of this, and all the staff. I stand in support of Neil, but against his amendment, and actually find myself able to support a lot of what my London colleague just said.

I understand the pain caused by things that were said in GS 2328. I understand why Neil feels it does not fulfil the intention to open a wide space within our existing doctrine of marriage, but that is because that was never possible. We have a doctrine of marriage. It is clear. It says things like "according to the teaching of our Lord", and we cannot simply throw that out without changing the doctrine and B 30.

What I have tried to do in all those hours of meetings, I said foolishly to Bishop Sarah I will go to any meeting where you think I can be helpful - I do not know if she thinks I have been helpful - but that has cost me 50 hours. It has cost her, I know, many, many, many more hours. This document attempts to restate the doctrine that we are being told is not changing, and yet proposes a pastoral step that is simply an offering at odds with that. To say that a practice is sinful is not opposed to a saviour who came to save us from sin. It is all of our discovery that we are sinful, and that it is pastoral to be told how and to be called to change. We disagree about what is sinful. That is the pain that we are caught in.

Archbishop, when 1 John says that we are united around our obedience to the Lord Jesus, Canon B 30 brings in what He said about marriage and about sex to our obedience to His commands. I would love us to move forward. I would love us to do better than the proposal in front of us to move forward. I am dedicated to helping in any way I can with that. But we must still be able at least, as we stand before Jesus, to teach what He taught.

The Chair: I am looking for two more speakers, one in favour and one against.

Canon Dr John Mason (Chester): I am just struck by this motion as I am wondering what does “referring to the Report GS 2328” add to it? By referring to it, if it is not there it does not mean that we do not understand that progress has been made. It does not mean that we do not understand that the arguments have been set out. I am not sure what it adds to it, but I can see a danger in including it, which is that it will look as if the motion is endorsing perhaps more than is required of that motion, that all elements of the Report are something that the Synod agrees with, and it is quite clear that is not the case.

If we can continue to have a reference in it, I worry that might make it less attractive for us to vote for the motion as a whole because people will feel “I do not want to have that reference in because I do not want to appear like I am endorsing a document which contains quite a lot which I really cannot go along with”. I want to support this amendment. I do not think we will lose anything by removing it, and we will avoid people not being able to support the full motion.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham): We have been told several times that what the world wants to see in us is to be able to disagree well and to hold together our differences. I do not think that is true at all. I do not think the world out there is particularly interested in the intricacies of our argument or where our differences arise. If they have a view, they have a conclusion, and either side does not understand why we do not agree with them.

What the world actually wants to see from us, I think, is things like transparency, honesty and integrity. They do not admire an organisation which makes powerful decisions amongst the powerful behind closed doors. They do not admire an organisation where we have lawyers sitting in front of us who have given advice to those in purple, but not to anybody else, and none of the rest of us can see it. It does not look like integrity.

The world does not want to see people who have stood up and made public vows to uphold the doctrine of the Church and actually then disregard them. I think that this paper begins to acknowledge that, and acknowledge the need to integrate the question of pastoral advice with legal and theological thinking. The great shepherd of the sheep, Jesus himself, our supreme pastor, was also Jesus the teacher. He never separated his pastoral care and love from people from his teaching. We cannot separate His command to love from His command to obey.

The reason why we need His commandments is because we do not know rightly how to love. When we separate these things from one another, we are not living integrated lives but we are disintegrating. We are disintegrating the teaching of Jesus and we are disintegrating ourselves as His body. We need to keep this, and we need to make sure that our pastoral decisions are lined up with legal advice, because that is how we do doctrine, with the teaching of the Church and with the teaching of Jesus, because we want to be a whole people as He is one.

The Chair: I wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 34 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 34.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried. We proceed to a vote on Item 34.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Point of order. Please, may I call for a vote by Houses?

The Chair: Yes, if I see 25 people standing, there will be a vote by Houses and I do see 25 people standing and so there will be a vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 34: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 13, against 20, with 1 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 84 in favour, 99 against, with 6 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 86 in favour, 106 against, with 5 recorded abstentions. The amendment is lost.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chair: Synod, you will see the to-ing and fro-ing with the Registrar. Can we check, or can you check that you have a voting card from this session? If you have been able to vote so far, obviously it works, but if anybody has problems, please go to the information desk and sort it out because it is probably easier for the vote if you do that first.

ITEM 35

The Chair: We move to Item 35. Clive Scowen.

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Thank you, Chair. Can I check how long I have?

The Chair: Three minutes

Mr Clive Scowen (London): Thank you very much. Synod is profoundly divided, both as to the rightness of the prayers and as to the nature of our disagreement. At times like this, the laws of the Church are exceptionally important. They are the structure which

enables a divided Church to function. So surely the one thing we can all agree on is that we need clarity about whether what is proposed is lawful.

And divided though we are, we are one Synod with three Houses. The House of Bishops has no legal existence apart from the Synod. Each House is equal. Each has to agree in order for Synod to make decisions, as we are being reminded repeatedly. So surely we must have equal access to legal advice about a course of action which is proposed to us. The House of Bishops is not the government, or the executive, or even a governance body over and against the other Houses of Synod, yet the bishops are not willing to share with the rest of us the advice which they have received. It is not good enough to say that the advice is reflected in the papers. What we have there is the bishops' view of the advice received and what they have made of it. That is not the same thing.

Laitly and clergy should be entrusted with the legal advice the House of Bishops has seen so that we can decide for ourselves whether what is before us is lawful. Prior to the February Synod, the bishops let us see a document containing legal advice to the same effect as the advice they had received, but not this time. I have to ask why? What is so different this time? Could it be that, whereas in February the advice was broadly supportive of what the bishops were proposing, this time it is not? I do not know, and, unless you are a bishop, you do not know either. We can only speculate and possibly assume the worst, unless the bishops share their advice or a document to the same effect with us.

Since two of the three Houses have not seen advice about the lawfulness of what the bishops intend to do, we cannot responsibly vote for the motion before us. But this need not require a delay. It is open to the bishops tonight to agree to share that advice, and we can read it overnight, sleep on it, and come back tomorrow and take a decision. It is really in the hands of the bishops as to whether the passing of this amendment would cause a delay. But the passing of this amendment would send a powerful message that the Synod is not content to be treated in the way we have been and be denied access to the advice that only one House has received.

So, I urge Synod, even the members of the House of Bishops, to do the right thing and let us all see what the bishops have seen.

The Chair: I can sit here longer than you can. I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): I have lost sight of Clive's shirt. Thank you, Clive, for your words. GS 2328 is a document which is the foundation of the House of Bishops' theological and legal basis for how we are going forward. You will recall that, in February, the House felt that we should show you our theological workings, so you have them in that document, along with the legal foundation of the proposals for us moving forward. Therefore, the proposals GS 2328 reflect the legal advice that we have received. It is clear and it is transparent. Therefore, I would

suggest to Clive that tonight he goes back and re-reads GS 2328, and he will see the foundation of the legal advice that we have been given.

It is fair to say that the legal advice that we have given comes in many forms. You can imagine both the College and the House talk quite a bit, and therefore, there are conversations where theology and the law have spoken and worked together. It is impossible to show you the detail of that because that is not recorded, but what you have in GS 2328 is the legal foundation upon which we have given you the decisions. It is there clear and transparent in that document.

I would also raise another point. We do respect Synod, which is why these documents are here, which is why, actually, we are listening to this debate. And I have heard, as I think we said in some of the questions, the concerns that people have about the transparency of the House of Bishops. Transparency and openness are different from confidentiality. I may be wrong, and somebody will correct me, but I do believe the Archbishop of York suggested that the House of Bishops' Standing Committee will reflect on what we are hearing. But I want to assure you there is nothing that is being hidden. You have the legal foundation upon which our discussions have occurred.

What you will also see in that document is our very clear view that not everybody agrees. We know that you may not agree with the position that we have put. That is where we are.

Another point of clarity is just to say that of course there are three Houses here - Clergy, Laity and the Bishops - and they are all very important, but the House of Bishops is a collective voice of the Episcopate. And it goes beyond the House: governance is entrusted to the House of Bishops, collectively, and individually as dioceses. That is just a point of order for Clive. I am sure he will pick it up with me later.

I want to reassure you that we are not hiding anything. We have been transparent with you about our differences and disagreements in the House of Bishops. The paper that you have in GS 2328 is the formation of the legal advice that we have been given and, therefore, I will resist this amendment, not least because I believe it is delaying. The delaying of what we are doing is hurtful, not just to the LGBTQI clergy and laity in our congregations, but also to those clergy who particularly are in discernment processes who do not agree with what we are doing. They have asked us to move quickly, and I urge Synod to resist this amendment.

The Chair: Could you just sit down for the moment? As the Bishop has not accepted the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I certainly see 25 members standing, so the debate will continue.

Can we remind ourselves that kindness and love are words which we need to reflect on to each other? Can I see those who are in favour of the amendment?

The Revd Jonathan Jee (Coventry): For the avoidance of doubt, I am not Nick Robinson from the BBC!

Thank you, Chair, for calling me. This is my maiden speech. I am a child of the Church of England. My father was a country vicar. I swore I would never be ordained. I saw the huge cost to ministry, without appreciating any of the joys. As a teenager, I was torn two ways, between following Jesus but not liking the look of the cost. It was not a good place to be. Aged 18, just before I went to university, I bowed my knee to Jesus as my Lord because I knew He was true. I expected following Him to be difficult, but I was bowled over by the joy that came in following Him.

A few years later, I was surprised to be called to be ordained myself. Again I resisted it, but I gave in reluctantly: I knew it would not be easy. I was ordained aged 25, and once again surprised by the joy in following God's call. I was beginning to learn that following Jesus's call was costly but it is also the way to joy, and the two go together. That was 35 years ago. I have been in parish ministry ever since, for the last 25 years as vicar at the same church in Leamington Spa.

By God's grace it has been my privilege to serve in growing churches with lots of children all these years. It has rarely been easy. There has been much joy as well as plenty of cost. Again, the two go together. I have learned that the cost of following Jesus goes with the joy.

In the New Testament the word for "trouble" is often next door to the word for "joy". Of course, I know almost nothing about the cost of following Jesus compared with our brothers and sisters in the persecuted Church, but whenever I meet them, I am struck by just how much joy they radiate.

As a curate and a young vicar, I do quite a lot of youth work and led a CPAS venture for teenagers. It often fell to me and my wife to do the seminar on sex and relationships. It struck us that the question we were most often asked by the teenagers was, "How far can we go? What can we get away with?" We decided we needed to help them rephrase that question, not "what can we get away with?", but "how can we live to please the Lord?" If He is the source of life and joy, the closer we live to Him, the more we obey His commands, the more joy we will know, though it will be costly.

This whole debate on LLF all year reminds me of those years with the teenagers. It feels like we are being "what can we get away with?". Not how can we live to please God, but how far can we go in flirting with blessing sexual immorality? Not, it seems, good to the Holy Spirit and to us, but an uneasy tension between two contradictory roads. Surely our priority must be to please God. I urge you that we do all we can to make sure there is not a hint of sexual immorality, which is why we need to hear some guidance.

Professor Helen King (Oxford): I am speaking against this amendment and against the next two which want to halt it all until whenever. I think, as Bishop Sarah said, much of this is about delaying. I think it is time for some history. Anyone would think there has been nothing like this before, but there has, and it was gradual, but there were points when a decision had to be made. Like the Bishop of Worcester, I am an adulterer in the eyes of some in this Church, and of some in this chamber, because, like him, I married someone who has been divorced. I want to remind members here of how the Church addressed the question of marriages like mine. The history and the fears expressed have something to say to us when we are considering this further area of pastoral provision.

In my teens, I was aware that one married couple at our church did not take Communion because one of them had been divorced with a former spouse still living. So within my lifetime it was not just that marriage after divorce could not happen in church, it disbarred you from receiving the Sacrament. If you had not realised, think about that for a moment. Did we split the Church over it? No.

Fast forward 30 years or so, and I met the man I would go on to marry. His first wife, the mother of their children, had died. He went on to marry again, a marriage which ended in divorce. It devastated him. So signing on with that Christian dating site led to a crash course in where we were on divorce in 2005. We were allowed to marry. On Monday, the Bishop of Winchester listed all the sexuality reports, and for divorce and remarriage too, the Church produced report after report alongside and in response to changes in civil law. In 1978, for example, it proposed that divorced people could marry in church with the bishop's permission. It was lost in the House of Clergy, and that was sent to the dioceses, as is proposed in the B 2 route favoured now. Three years later, there was no result, although the dioceses agreed such people could be admitted to Holy Communion. Victory!

It grieves me that those who are pushing now for formal structure provision sometimes say they will not be able to receive Communion alongside a bishop who agrees with same-sex blessings. What is wrong with us that we so closely ring-fence the Sacrament so freely offered to us? There has been a long process, and we are just getting to the point here where a decision needs to be made on one small step of the process.

I urge you to support the motion and to reject the next three amendments, all of which seek to stop the process.

The Chair: It really is not a clapping contest, you know

Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth): Friends, will you allow me to just explain to you why I emailed poor Edward Dobson at 3 am last week, because I suddenly realised that we need legal advice before these proposals are taken forward. Please allow me to explain to you why I believe that to be the case.

The legal advice provided in advance of the passing of the motion in February indicated that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* were not indicative of a change in the doctrine of marriage under Canon B 30 and, on that basis, Synod felt able to vote the motion through. However, it is now clear from Annex A to GS 2328 that it is recognised that the Church's teaching on sexual activity is also part of the Church's doctrine on marriage.

It is acknowledged in GS 2328 that the bishops now been advised that, "It would be difficult to say that making the *Prayers of Love and Faith* available for same-sex couples without there being an assumption as to their sexual relationships was not indicative of any departure from the Church's doctrine". The bishops, however, tell us that they have concluded that, in the circumstances, such a departure would not be "in any essential matter". This is apparently on the basis that this would be a "small change" in matters which are regarded as doctrinal, and that they would still be safeguarding the essential doctrines of the Church of England. But this is despite the fact that GS 2328 clearly accepts that the *Book of Common Prayer* teaches that marriage "is the proper context for sexual intercourse", and it is the Church's understanding that the place of sexual intimacy is within marriage.

Friends, this all raises many questions, not least why the doctrinal difficulties were not acknowledged in February before we took our vote, and whether the bishops are in fact correct in this new argument that their proposed departure from doctrine would not be in any essential matter. Bearing in mind the Church has been considering issues around this since 1978, it appears to be a most surprising conclusion to come to. It is also inconsistent with statements made by the House of Bishops as recently as 2019.

It was also confirmed this morning by the representative of FAOC that they consider the doctrine of marriage, which includes the place of sex, not to be a matter indifferent.

As such, I suggest that the conclusion of the bishops seems open to serious doubt. Friends, there must be transparency and proper process in this matter. I am sure you will agree it is essential that Synod is not encouraged to try to pass proposals that are in fact *ultra vires* their powers as a legislative body. We are not able to be sure that the proposals to commend the *Prayers* are lawful because we have not seen any updated legal advice on the matter. As part of our responsibilities as legislators we need to be satisfied that the proposals are lawful.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark): Last week, Lydia, my three-year-old, sat me and my wife down and presented two silver football trophy cups to us and stood in front of us and said, "Here is bread. Here is wine". My heart swelled, and I did what any good Anglican father would do and reported her to Bishop Christopher for lack of permission to officiate!

But this very morning she delighted me yet further with her pastoral skills. As I was changing my newborn son, she got me out of bed, saying "Hurry, dad", as he cried. As

he wailed while I was trying to find nappies and changing mats and all that sort of stuff, she said, "Hurry up, dad, he's sad", because she had compassion for sadness above everything else that was going on in the proper and the other order of things.

Revelation 24:1 gives us this image of a God that will dwell among people and wipe away every tear from their eyes. There has been a lot of hurt in this room and there has been a lot of hurt outside this room. I am sorry, conservatives, that you have felt your place in this Church so badly affected by this, and I am aware there are tears there. But I have even more sympathy with the real victims to whom we have apologised: the LGBTQIA+ people who we apologised to in February. We need to follow this through, and we need not delay. I have sympathy, I really do, with wanting more legal advice to be transparent, but that is not what this does. This is a delaying amendment. We should not be fooled into thinking it is something different from what it is. We could have an amendment that asks to publish the legal advice, but it does not; it is a delay.

I have spent the last couple of weeks on Twitter being policed by the Evo police telling me I am not an evangelical. And who knows about that? You can decide. God can decide as well. But what I would like to be is evangelistic. I have good news to share. I have a Gospel to proclaim and all those opportunities that we could have for sharing that good news, talking about poverty in our communities that our churches are solving, spreading the good news of Jesus and a life in the world to come; we could be doing that. Please just stop delaying everything to play games with this. We have had enough now.

I would like to share the good news and be thinking about youth work and all those exciting things that we could be doing as a Church. Let us do what we did in February. Let us ask for the publishing of legal advice. Please do not delay any more. There are people who are crying and wailing, and God don't like that.

The Chair: Mae Christie, are you speaking for or against the amendment?

The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark): Against.

The Chair: Somebody to speak for the amendment. The gentleman here.

The Revd Mae Christie (Southwark): "God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God abides in them". Friends, today I am so glad today to have heard those words from 1 John quoted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Philip, as well as Charlie in this chamber.

I want to resist this amendment because I think that we have delayed long enough and, frankly, it is time to pull the band aid. I have been thinking a lot about this phrase "God is love" and, in fact, it is on my bracelet here. This is a Taylor Swift style bracelet made my niece Ina who lives in Aberdeen, and it says "God is love".

One of my greatest challenges as a priest is to convey to people that God loves them; that God's deepest desire is for them to know that they are loved whoever they are, whatever they have done, wherever they live, whatever they look like and whoever they love; that they can live lives marked by love, mercy, compassion and the unburdening forgiveness of their sins, available to both them and their neighbour.

We know that so many have experienced the opposite, and indeed many here. Yes, in church, but also at home, at school, at work - the list goes on. This is particularly true of LGBTQIA+ people. I believe that this amendment unfairly delays the progress that we are trying to make and the decision that we have before us. I believe that the main motion, and other possible amendments, give priests like me an opportunity up and down the country to share the good news of God's love afresh in this generation, and to show, as it also says in 1 John, to love not in word and speech but in truth and in action, and to be able to offer services that dignify the loving relationships which people have, with integrity and the love that they deserve. It provides a multitude of pastoral opportunities for priests just like me. Please let me do my job.

I am a parish priest. I am vicar of a church in Tooting, just south of here. We are not massive and we are not tiny. We are growing, and we are a diverse church. There are people from all over the world, people from many different traditions including conservative evangelicals, Roman Catholics and the like who attend my church, and for at least four decades it has been a place where LGBTQIA+ people are welcomed, honoured, affirmed and dignified. They have served in key ministry and leadership roles. Ours is not a unique story. We are not that special, actually. Perhaps that describes your church as well.

So let us work together to provide the progress that we could have for churches like mine, for us to be able to sure the good news of Jesus Christ's love and salvation for each and every one of us. Let us not be mired in this process. Let us move on and make progress.

The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn): When I read the LLF Synod papers, I was tempted to text the British Transport Police on 61016 because I had seen something that didn't look right. When we had the papers in February, the legal advice on the basis of which the House of Bishops brought their motion was disclosed to Synod, and we were able to consider and scrutinise it and, in the light of it, have an informed debate and cast an informed vote. The legal questions pertaining to the *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the accompanying *Pastoral Guidance* were out in the open at that stage, and debated and contested in a spirit of dialogue and transparency.

That the House of Bishops has declined to publish their updated advice nine months later concerns me greatly. To move from transparency to opacity as the prayers move from draft form to pretty much oven-ready is not a good look. Had the advice before February's group of sessions not been published because of client confidentiality, I could at least have understood and respected the consistency, but publishing them then and not doing so now, well, that does not look right.

I have not managed to get sight of the advice. Whoever leaks from the House of Bishops to the *Church Times* and certain prominent politicians does not leak to me. Unrelated, my email address is my name @gmail.com. Therefore, without sight of the advice, I am afraid I smell a rat. I suspect the legality of the bishops' proposed move is now rather more contested; that the line "the commendation of such prayers is not indicative of change of doctrine" is now viewed as rather uncertain, at best. I suspect the attempted distinction between marriage and Holy Matrimony has now been considerably qualified, if not abandoned.

I might be wrong, all might be fine and well, but without seeing the legal basis on which the bishops are proceeding, how can you expect me meaningfully to welcome their work on implementation? Publish the legal advice before you proceed, overnight if necessary, and then there is no more delay. Publish the legal advice before you proceed. I have said it, let's see it, and then it can be sorted.

The Chair: I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 35 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 35.

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

The Chair: So, we now proceed to vote on Item 35.

The Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby): Given the effect on the overall processes the amendment will have, could I please ask if you would be willing to test the mind of Synod to have a counted vote by Houses, please?

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, so there will be a counted vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 35: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 10, against 22, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 88 in favour, 99 against, with no recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 93 in favour, 98 against, with 6 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 36

The Chair: We move to Item 36. My intention is that we pursue this amendment until 7 o'clock, and at 7 o'clock we will pause and, if we are not finished, we will come back tomorrow. You can, of course, all do your night time viewing on YouTube and if you want to replay it tomorrow morning to be fresh in your minds as to what we have done today, then by all means do it. It sounds a bit sad to be honest, but there we are. The Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham.

The Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham (The Rt Revd Paul Williams): The Apostle Paul urges “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”, and I am sure, Synod, that is what this amendment, above all, seeks to do. It has been said that in any complex leadership undertaking that while you cannot be certain you had better be clear. In bringing this amendment, I want to urge Synod to reduce the risk to the unity and the pastoral stability of the Church of England by asking the House of Bishops to complete the work on the *Pastoral Guidance* and bring it for the consideration of Synod before commending the prayers. That is what the Next Steps Group said they would do from the outset.

At present, we cannot be certain what harm will be done to the mission that we share by further undermining the fragile trust that clearly exists between us. We should mitigate the risk to unity by inviting the bishops to increase clarity so that we may more responsibly manage the uncertainty, and especially as we navigate our way through the fog that has descended on us since February; a fog which seems at times to also be obscuring from view the resolutions made and the Cornes amendment itself.

Appealing now to the benefits of a more iterative process only increases the confusion, while leaving, clearly, a good number here concerned that something more is being hidden. I am compelled to, respectfully and very regrettably, say that I cannot agree with the opinion that nothing that might be useful to this Synod is simply not being withheld. I believe that there are a number of things - discussions, decisions and advice that we have received in the House - that would be useful to the Synod, and important for its work at this time, but that is held behind SO 14.

Now, in bringing in amendment, in particular, it is the ministry section of the *Pastoral Guidance* that will most clearly reveal the nature and the extent of any change of doctrine, and of course, the rawness of our disagreement. GS 2328 acknowledges the complexity of the topics to be covered under the ministry section. They are complex because they are also the most contentious, and passing this motion now unamended risks raising false hopes of further change for some, or generating unnecessary fears for others.

Further, to imply that we as bishops get to decide whether or not there has been a change in any essential matter without carefully weighing the theological implications, and then bringing it to Synod, is not taking sufficient care of the flock. It is also, I believe, contrary to the constitutional framework of the Church. Competence on these matters has been conferred upon General Synod, not to one deliberative House alone. The present process disregards this reality.

So for the sake of the wellbeing of the Church we serve and hold dear, I urge us to take the time needed to bring the completed *Pastoral Guidance* to Synod before commending the *Prayers*, which will also permit fuller legal advice as well as the more detailed proposals for structural pastoral provision. It is for this reason I move the amendment before you.

The Chair: The Bishop to respond to Item 36

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Bishop Paul, for your words. I think that we have always been clear that the *Pastoral Guidance* is not like *Issues in Human Sexuality*. It is not about a book that has been agreed and then put on the shelf for 30 years and used for different purposes than it was created.

The *Pastoral Guidance* is much more similar to guidance that maybe we see in other parts of our lives. There are three sections: section 1 deals with the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, section 2 deals with the local church, and section 3 with the ministry. Section 1 on the *Prayers in Love and Faith* (of which you will have seen a draft in the papers) relates at the moment to those *Prayers* that are being commended as a suite.

By the time we get to the authorization of the standalone services under B 2, new *Pastoral Guidance* will need to be made and put in that document, which, therefore, is likely to be 2025-2026. Therefore, to wait for the *Pastoral Guidance* to be complete is not realistic because it is not that type of document. So when next year we come forward with the proposal around B 2 for authorization, there will new *Pastoral Guidance* that will relate to it. It may well be that because of the authorization of B 2, there will also need to be new *Pastoral Guidance* that sits in section 2 for the local church. And of course, rightly, Paul, you raise the fact that we hope to bring back in spring next year section 3 which relates to ministry.

It is entirely possible that, once we have established the Pastoral Consultative Group, where there are issues of complexity that go to that group, the *Pastoral Guidance* may well change. Therefore, to say that you want to wait for the *Pastoral Guidance* to be completed, actually it is not type of document. We have committed to bring the *Pastoral Guidance* for each section as we move forward, and therefore, I would ask Synod to resist this motion.

The Chair: As the Bishop of London does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I see 25 members standing, so the debate will continue. Who wants to speak in favour of the amendment?

The Ven. Luke Miller (London): I welcome this amendment. We should have all the guidance. There are five issues which are not, I think, niche but which specifically affect the clergy. First, whether they use or do not use the *Prayers*, the *Pastoral Guidance* will provide protection for clergy from challenge. Without it, clergy are potentially exposed. Even had legal advice been shared, it would have been necessary to see the guidance in full before the *Prayers* are commended. This means, secondly, that the *Pastoral Guidance* fits into the framework of clergy discipline, and with the Clergy Conduct

Measure passing through Synod, we need to be clear about how these two pieces of legislation join up.

Thirdly, in theory, conduct of the clergy is defined by the Canons but, in practice, *Issues in Human Sexuality*, which LLF is rightly to replace, and the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, which the CCM is to replace, have been used to define unbecoming conduct. As the introduction to the guidelines notes, they were not written to do this. They have carried a weight which they were never designed to hold and the result has been a sense of unfairness for many, and misery for some. We must not repeat this mistake. The new documents need to have enough legal framework and weight.

Fourthly, the *Pastoral Guidance* is to be a suite of documents, as Bishop Sarah has just said, which will evolve and change to fit changing circumstances; our conduct judged against the guidance as it was when we acted as we did. This assumes a distinction between life and work, but we are making decisions about how we order our households, run our whole lives, with whom we may enter into a friendship, whom we may marry. Unless we resign our orders, we are bound by ecclesiastical discipline, even if we do not have a licence. You cannot evolve the rules regularly, easily in that environment.

Fifthly and finally, who will decide on what is to evolve, and how and when? *Issues* is a document of the House of Bishops, but the guidelines belong to the lower Houses of the Convocations. We must ask how and when will the lower Houses be involved in matters which will touch all of us, and define not just our work but our lives? Will it be the House of Bishops by fiat, or the College by vote or, if the *Guidance* really is to mirror circumstances, maybe by the local ordinary. That is how managers work, but we of course are not managed. Or will there be consultation with the Convocations and all that that would mean? What about lay ministers and the baptised who are affected by how their pastors behave. So maybe the Synod? But then you cannot evolve in the way that you want.

There are lots of questions here, and they need to be thought through properly before these *Prayers* are commended and used, if the clergy are not to find themselves in an extraordinarily difficult position, whatever their view on the substantive issue. With this amendment, it might be possible still to vote for the main motion, although my understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage means that I shall not. But without this amendment, I cannot see how any cleric of any viewpoint can offer it their support, and I would ask the laity to hear these clerical concerns and also to support this amendment.

Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn): This is exceedingly difficult for me. This is probably going to be one of the worst days of my life. I have suffered extreme homophobic abuse. I have been raped three times in my life. We have to resist this amendment. We must go forward in order to stop the abuse and the harm continuing. This is purely delaying tactics, as was said earlier.

I believe wholeheartedly. I have been a church organist now for 45 years, and I have faithfully served the Church, because I believe in the two main Commandments of "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength", and "Love one another". I could not even be here without the love of my husband. He has come with me because he knows how hard this is. We need to go forward in love. The bishops have given us the document. They have told us the *Prayers*. They have given the guidance that goes with those *Prayers*. So let us not delay. Let us at least go forward rather than stagnate. I will be voting against this amendment. I will be voting in favour of the whole motion because it is time. We have all had enough. This has gone on for years.

I will tell you this, to those people who tell me I am going to hell and my salvation is lost, nothing can separate me from the love of God.

I want to finish, just to say - have I still got time left?

The Chair: You have enough time.

Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn): Good. I am sorry I could not see the light, I need new glasses, and at least my jacket worked to get called, so I do not need your pink jumper! I want to finish by saying there is a couple who came to our church from another diocese. They came, and the man admitted openly to me that he was homophobic. But he now sings in the choir and he is now part fully in the church. Because I do not have a living father, he said he will now be, in all but name, my father. He said he no longer is homophobic having met me. So where is the fear? There is no fear. We are all called together to walk with Christ. That is what I have done. My husband, who is a Catholic, now comes with me to church on a Sunday and he is churchwarden.

I encourage us all to resist this amendment and go forth in love.

The Chair: The Bishop of Sheffield, are you speaking for or against?

The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox): For.

The Chair: Then could I have someone to speak against. Mr Dotchin, and then I think we are probably going to pause.

The Bishop of Sheffield (The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox): Synod, I suspect that the reason why progress in implementing the motion as agreed in February has been glacially slow has relatively little to do with the content of the proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith*, or even the means by which they are commended or authorized, and far more to do with the apparently intractable trickiness of answering two fundamental questions, namely will the House of Bishops maintain, or will we relax the discipline that currently prohibits clergy from entering into same-sex civil marriage, and will we maintain or will we relax the frequently stated position of the House of Bishops that the only proper context for sexual intimacy is heterosexual marriage? The difficulty of course is this: many members of this

Synod believe it will not be possible to achieve a radical new Christian inclusion for LGBTI+ people unless these two positions are indeed relaxed. But there are also many of us who believe that to relax these matters touches directly on the doctrine of marriage and really would be indicative of a change to that doctrine.

The long awaited *Pastoral Guidance* section 3 is therefore vital to this debate because that is where those two questions will be explicitly addressed, and for that reason, although I do want to acknowledge the distress I realise a further delay will cause to many members of this Synod, I am convinced that it is necessary for the *Prayers*, the guidance and the arrangements for formal structural pastoral provision to be tabled to the Synod simultaneously and as a coherent whole. For that reason, I support the amendment.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): We are already too late for Lizzie Lowe. We are already too late for my cousin who committed suicide because he could not get the medication he needed to complete his transition. We are already too late for Nick Moore, who was murdered by a nail bomb in a pub in Soho nearly 25 years ago, which woke this country to our need to challenge hatred. I hope we are not too late for my nephew, who had to flee a country where there are laws against homosexuality and come here, not even his own nation. I hope we are not too late for Charlie and Emma who gave birth to their second child this morning, who are on the edges of, "Should I ask the vicar to baptise him or will we be turned away?"

And I really hope and pray that we are not too late for a child of ours who, at 12 years old on a Scripture Union camp in The Drakensberg, gave his heart to the Lord Jesus and has served him faithfully ever since, and 20 years ago received a vocation to the ordained ministry and has said, "I can't do that yet, dad, because the Church is not listening". We can wait no longer. I resist this amendment and the following one.

The Chair: We are going to pause there and adjourn the debate until tomorrow. We will begin the debate again, resumed on Item 36 at 9.15, but of course there is worship at 9 o'clock as there is worship immediately after I rise. Until tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE

In accordance with Standing Order 15(7), the Chair adjourned the Synod at 7.00 pm.

The Synod was led in an act of worship by the Diocese of Blackburn

**Full Synod: Third Day
Wednesday 15 November 2023**

WORSHIP

The Community of St Anselm led the Synod in an act of worship.

THE CHAIR *Mr Geoffrey Tattersall (Manchester)* took the Chair at 9.16 am

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH (RESUMED DEBATE)

The Chair: Now, yesterday, I made some reference to my daughter, and she tells me that she has discovered a channel to watch me on the TV. And it is all a bit worrying, really. And she did say, not by comparing Synod to anything in particular, but she did say that you have got longer to vote on *Strictly* than you do in the chamber. I did explain to her that if we took so long, we would be here for ever, which I am sure you would not want.

So we resume the debate on the Bishop of Southall & Nottingham's amendment. If you remember, and you probably have looked, as I encouraged you to last night, at the proceedings online, we had the Bishop of Southall & Nottingham, the Bishop of London's reply, we then had four speeches and I now, really, would like another couple of speeches, certainly, on either side of the debate.

So those who would speak in favour please. So Anna de Castro please, and those against. Rachel Webbley. And we are still on a three-minute limit, as you all know.

Mrs Anna de Castro (Sheffield): I am extremely privileged. I think I might have the best job in the world to be a minister to children and young people. I love my job, and I deeply love the young people I serve and their families. I would love for the 60 young people in our semi-rural parish to be able to look to the Church of England and see a Church who displays honesty, integrity, clarity. Their Church should have confidence in its unyielding commitment to being a beacon of faith and truth in our world, with consistency between the Church's professed and lived doctrines.

Instead, and without this amendment, these papers expose an embarrassing lack of integrity and consistency, exposing that the most senior leaders of our Church are happy to say one thing and commend another. You say you have nothing to hide with the legal advice, and yet you refuse to show it to us. Good governance is being sacrificed in bypassing Synod for the sake of forcing through a seemingly pre-determined outcome.

Promises to provide the much needed and desired full package of Prayers, guidance and reassurance are being broken unless we vote in favour of this amendment. Synod, our young people are watching, and I feel heartbroken about what they are seeing. Do you, or do you not, believe the Church's current doctrine of marriage, and is it, or is it not, the only proper place for expression of sexual intimacy?

If you say that this is what the Church still believes then why do these commendations entirely undermine this? I am trying, and yet I find it impossible to see how what you say you are doing has integrity with what you are commending to the Synod today, unless we vote in favour of this amendment, please.

Archbishops and bishops, say what you mean, and mean what you say, and then do it. If you are saying that God's word is not clear on these matters, and that the Church catholic has been remarkably united in its misunderstanding in what Scripture says for all these years, then why have you not proposed that we debate doctrine under Canon B 2?

A proposal like that would have some honesty and integrity, and if we vote in favour of this amendment, it would have honesty and integrity too. If the Church is deciding it believes something and teaches something different then let us debate that properly together, and make appropriate pastoral provision and reassurance to match it, as you promised us. Synod, please join me and vote in favour of this amendment.

The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury): I speak as an ordinary parish priest from Kent. The helpful, hard-won steps taken in February, and the gentle and respectful momentum of that work that had been helpful to our mission, had brought joy to many. And in July, Stephen Hofmeyr pointed out that February is when we did the heavy lifting.

This is a plea to continue at pace that careful work that was such an important milestone after so many years of thinking and praying, and to resist further delay that this and other amendments are attempting to bring. The twists and turns that already delay this work are confusing and painful for the silent majority of ordinary people in our pews. As a cradle-Anglican, ordained for nearly 20 years, those I have worked with in our Church of England are temperamentally unlikely to make a fuss, to write to a bishop or to go up to Pride.

But they love God, are doggedly faithful, kind and generous in a myriad of ordinary ways, living out their everyday faith in ways that do not always register on the Richter Scale of Church politics, but do show Christ's love in action. Most of these folk want everyone in their community to feel welcome in our local churches, including their beloved LGBTQIA+ children, grandchildren, friends, neighbours and those who sit with them in the pews.

We in the parishes understand that things change: women now do not have to wear a hat to church, left-handed children do not have their fingers rapped, and divorced people are not automatically barred from remarrying in church. We just want to get on with steadily witnessing to God's love in ways that make sense to ordinary people.

Earlier this year, even before February, a dear friend boycotted an event because of the Church's, as she saw it, homophobia. The clock is ticking on the goodwill and trust we have fostered in our communities, which will dwindle further if we drag our feet too long, with even the small steps taken in February towards receiving these *Prayers*.

I am sure many of us are tired of having to take time to explain that #itscomplicated. There is mission to be getting on with. Synod, we have set our hand to the plough, so let us not look back, but keep preparing the soil through offering these *Prayers*, so that God's love may take root and there may be an even greater harvest in our land. Please vote against this amendment, so there is no further delay to our work on behalf of the people we serve in our communities.

The Chair: Someone in favour of the amendment? And against? The Bishop of Stepney.

The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield): Love has been the crucial point in all of these debates, and this amendment goes towards that love that we are all here for. Karl Barth was asked what is the essence of the Christian faith; his reply, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so".

In these debates, with arguments and counter-arguments, we have lost sight of the love of Christ for a hurting world and Church. Friends, we have heard the pastoral reasons for these blessings, we have seen the proposed *Prayers*, we have heard and seen the canonical tennis and ecclesiastical gymnastics to try and make something fit that surely does not.

The trust in our bishops is at an all-time low, and our Church is at breaking point. The love that we all seek, which unites us, is revealed in the Bible, not in our emotions, which change almost minute-by-minute, but in the unity and truth of the Scriptures. The motion that we are choosing is to read one part of the Scriptures without the other. We are guilty of Marcionism, where we pick and choose the bits that we like and discard the others.

We see the women caught in adultery embraced in the love of Christ, and then told to go away and sin no more. That is loving. Friends, we are called to love, as seen in 1 John 5, which our Archbishops have mentioned, and so have others, but we cannot hold the love of God and the following of his commands separately. To do this would be to undermine the use of the Scriptures in our Church, breaking Article 6, breaking Canon A 5, and further diminishing the unity of the Church.

To commend these *Prayers* in a way is to pick up and choose who to love and who to throw away, and all that holds the Church of England together. In short, the Scriptures reveal the love of Christ that we wish to show to every person, but we must hold on to them as the most precious gift. That is why we must resist the motion, but accept this amendment, until the *Prayers* of implementation and the further guidance are put in place. Yes, Jesus loves you, the Bible tells us so. Please support the amendment and vote down the whole motion.

The Bishop of Stepney (The Rt Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell): I want to speak against amendment 36. There are three reasons why I do not think it would be helpful to delay this piece of work until the *Pastoral Guidance* is complete. The first is around the nature

of the *Pastoral Guidance*. Both words matter here. “Pastoral”, because this is about responding to the reality of people’s lives.

People already come seeking marriage in church with a range of family situations. Some already with children, some with complex histories of previous relationships, legal circumstances, and so on. Clergy and church communities are extraordinarily skilled at loving, responding, drawing people, without ever so many questions, into the heart of their communities, and asking God to bless and help their relationship flourish.

I do not believe that it is any different with same-sex couples seeking blessing. Let us trust clergy and church communities to be pastoral. To do all of this well, we need guidance which can be adapted and updated, parameters not rules, navigating not with a pre-programmed Satnav, but, as St Augustine put it, by love.

The second is around the nature of the questions we ask people and the potential asymmetry of those. With anyone coming for marriage or seeking prayers of blessing, I want to talk about how they are with each other, how they hold trust, fidelity and love together. I want to talk about sexual ethics, the ethics at least as much as the sex.

I do not want to end up having to talk about, and only with those who are gay, genital contact, what a friend of mine once called the Lego school of sex education - which bits fit with others. Such conversations make us all less than human. Let me be clear, I am not asking for a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. Secrecy and shame help no one, especially in safeguarding.

But what I am advocating for is a generous space where we hold carefully the developing and fragile holiness of someone’s life and do not create an asymmetry where we ask gay people questions about their relationships that we would not ask straight people.

My third reason is much simpler. I do not believe that this pastoral guidance could ever be written in a way that would convince some of those pushing for this delay now to vote for the motion overall. This is an unhelpful delay. Please resist the amendment, and seek instead a more generous space where we can treat each other and all those we love with humanity.

The Chair: I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 36 has been sufficiently debated and therefore I put the motion for closure on Item 36.

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

The Chair: We proceed to vote on Item 36.

The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby): Point of order. Chair, given the important effect this amendment will have on the overall process, can I ask you to test the mind of Synod with a counted vote by Houses, please?

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? I do, therefore there will be a counted vote by Houses on Item 36.

On Item 36: The House of Bishops, those in favour 12, 25 against, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 80 in favour, 97 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 92 in favour, 93 against, with no recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 37

The Chair: So we move to Item 37. Ladies and gentlemen, I am told that you are talking too much and the sound is not reaching the microphones, so can we be a bit quieter please. We will move now to Item 37. I call upon Mr Vaughan Roberts to move his item at 37.

The Revd Canon Vaughan Roberts (Oxford): We are told we are in a time of uncertainty, but I have heard very little uncertainty in this chamber in the last couple of days. Surely a better description is a time of competing certainties. The sad reality is we do not agree, we cannot agree and we will not agree, not any time soon, so we are stuck in the trenches. And if this motion is passed, that will not change, we will be back here for more, fighting over every inch of ground.

This amendment offers a different and better way, a pause, so that we might make, as an urgent priority, the seeking of a settlement by which both sides agree on structural provision so we can move forward. There will be those who say this is a delaying tactic, but actually this will move us forward to where we both want to be. By creating space, this is the quickest way by which those with irreconcilable differences can move forward.

Those who want more change, more than a crumb, you can get it quicker, and those of us who resist change will be able to preserve our doctrinal and ecclesial integrity. And some might say, okay, we are going to need something like this but not now, let us pass the *Prayers*, but we are not ready to do so. If this motion is passed there will be a tearing of the fabric of the Church of England at its deepest level in every parish, deanery and diocese. We are not ready for that.

Those who want change, suppose you are in a diocese where the bishop says, in conscience, they cannot commend the *Prayers* and, if the *Pastoral Guidance* changes, they will not be able to ordain or license someone in a same-sex marriage. What provision or protection do you have? Nothing.

And those of us who will feel the need to distance ourselves from the spiritual authority of our bishops, again, will be in an episcopal limbo, no provision or protection. Many will

leave the Church of England on both sides if we continue in this rut, feeling there is no secure, safe space for them.

There is a better way, and it is urgently needed so we can get out of the trenches and get on with mission. This is the way of consensus without compromise, space without schism, differentiation without divorce. I move the amendment in my name.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): The House of Bishops has committed to develop proposals around formal, structural pastoral provisions and to bring those proposals in spring of 2024 to Synod, along with the section 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance*, and, we hope, the process for B 2. Priests, can of course, already pray with same-sex couples in pastoral settings. Not to commend the suite of *Prayers of Love and Faith* would be, I believe, to lose the confidence of this Synod, which approved the motion back in February 2023.

And therefore, I would resist this motion. I would, however, be interested to hear from members of Synod, not just why they think either we should have formal, structural pastoral provision or not, but maybe, if you want formal, structural pastoral provision, what this offers to those who do not; and maybe if you do not, how you can reassure those who do.

The Chair: So the Bishop resists the amendment. The debate will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places, which they do, so the debate continues. Now, can I look for those who are for the amendment, Felicity Cooke, and those against the amendment.

Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely): I am actually speaking against the amendment. This is my maiden speech, and I do want to speak against the amendment calling for structural provision. This is actually another delaying amendment. I want to address an underlying justification for structural provision, which is the idea that a significant minority in the Church do not accept the direction of travel on LLF.

In fact, yesterday, mention was made of hundreds of thousands who do not support the *Prayers* and the blessings. Large congregations in conservative evangelical churches are represented as being completely in agreement on issues of sexuality, but are they? Have they been asked? We already know some do not because they have publicly said so.

Now, in my medium-sized, semi-rural parish in south Cambridgeshire, we followed the LLF course and then we asked people what they thought about same-sex relationships and same-sex weddings. And the response rate for our survey was over 50%, which is good. 85% of our respondents supported same-sex blessings, 10% did not, and 5% were undecided. 63% of our respondents supported same-sex weddings, 14% did not, and the remainder were undecided.

So we did ask the questions, and a significant majority supported same-sex blessings, with a smaller majority supporting same-sex weddings. I would invite leaders of these large congregations to do the same, to give people an opportunity to state their views without fear or favour.

By the way, our congregation has grown since we conducted that survey two years ago. I urge you to vote against this amendment.

The Chair: Now, Miss Gorman, you are speaking also against the amendment, so can I try and interpose somebody who is for the amendment in the interests of balance. Gracy Crane? Can you speak first and you speak second? Sorry about this, but I am trying to get a balance.

Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford): This is my maiden speech. Can we all agree to disagree well, and what does this look like for us all as believers in Christ? I read in GS 2328 that the House of Bishops is not, at this stage, advocating for formal structural provision. The words "at this stage" puzzle me exceedingly. At which stage will the House of Bishops know that they are ready for structural provision? And more importantly, how will they know? What are the signs that they will be looking for to get this additional insight? What steps are they putting in place to gather this insight that will enable this?

I work as a scientist, and this is what I would label as unfinished work needing further development. My plea to the bishops, then, is why not complete what has been started, why tease us this way? An analogy from the corporate world, where I work, would be please bring forward an end-to-end proposal, not one with missing parts, or one where ideas have been explored, ideas that we would like to explore further, and that have just been cast aside.

It is there, it is there in the papers, you just have to find the page and elaborate them further. This, in my view, by casting ideas aside is not attentive listening, which Bishop Sarah said we all need to pay attention to. From what we have all seen and heard, we inherently have different views, so let us agree to disagree well. Please put forward the details of the formal, structural provision and we can get PLF done.

Miss Lucy Gorman (York): Apparently, as of yesterday, in Parliament we have a Common Sense Minister, so let us have a slight injection of common sense. We have been here before, both historically and actually last February. We have already been here, we have done it, we have voted for it, let us just crack on, guys.

The doctrine of marriage is life-long between one man and one woman, for life. We get it, that is fine. But we do now remarry divorced people. I am marrying someone who is divorced, the world does not implode. It does not take away from any other relationship, blessing same-sex partnerships and marriages does not take away from anything that

you hold personally to you. It does not take away from your relationship, it simply adds to another.

If we are sent out to spread the good news, what is the good news to the LGBT+ community if we cannot bless their love? If you do not want to do them, if you do not want to perform them, that is fine. I can guarantee that if a couple come to you and ask you to do a same-sex blessing and you turn around and say, "In all conscience, I am sorry but I cannot do it", that couple do not want you to do it. Nobody wants you to bless their marriage and their love when you do not believe it is right. And that is okay.

The bishops have reassured you that you are not going to get in trouble for it. We are exempt of equality laws so no one can take you to court. Please do not delay this anymore. If we vote for this amendment, we are still in the rut, we are still in the trenches. People are planning blessings as of February's decision, let us let them do that. Let us just crack on, do the work that we voted for in February. Please vote against this amendment.

Mrs Sarah Finch (London): The prospect of *Prayers of Love and Faith* being commended has already caused division in the Church of England. I do not think that that is a controversial thing to say. There is division in the House of Bishops, division in General Synod, division in dioceses, division in deaneries. And, if these prayers are commended, there will be division in parishes all over England.

It is not surprising, therefore, that new, temporary, alternative structures have already begun to emerge, and they will continue to emerge. Here people can express their Christian unity together, but they will have nothing to do with the spiritual oversight of those who pursue a revisionist agenda, and so what could be done to help these church leaders and congregations to remain within the Church of England, rather than be excluded or driven out?

In Annex F, concerning *Pastoral Reassurance*, it was good to read in paragraph 17 that the bishops intend to explore "arrangements for formal, structural pastoral provision for churches who believe that they need some degree of differentiation from churches, bishops and other church structures who favour the use of the prayers".

It was also good to read in the next paragraph, 18, that in the bishops' declaration, or statement, this principle might be included: "We seek the flourishing of all". How is this to be arrived at? I suggest more work needs to be done on identifying what provision is needed. What is important is not that the bishops should decide in a vacuum what they think these churches will tolerate, but rather that they should ask them what do you need to be reassured and genuinely to flourish?

I ask you, please, to support this amendment.

The Chair: Someone to speak against the amendment? I am sorry, I want somebody to speak for the amendment, I am just getting confused. It is my age, do not worry.

The Very Revd Chris Dalliston (Dean of Peterborough): A few weeks ago, my wife and I celebrated our 34th wedding anniversary, not especially remarkable, you might think, except that at the time of our marriage I was divorced, and our church wedding only happened because of the readiness of the then Bishop of Chelmsford to take, what I now recognise with profound gratitude, was the very risky but amazingly generous step of marrying us in church.

Our lives in our now shared ministry, so my wife is also a priest, have been able to bear fruit and flourish because of the generosity of a church, that as Bishop Inge and Dr King have already reminded us, has chosen to live gracefully with profound disagreement on the issue of remarriage.

As with our debate today, this was and is an issue that touches on the theology of marriage, obviously. It was and is an issue where Jesus's views, as expressed in the Gospels, were unequivocal. Nevertheless, this was and is an issue where the Church has seemingly learnt to live with those differences generously and allowed for the freedom of conscience without the need for separate structures or distinct integrities.

All sorts of issues might potentially demand protection for our consciences and our strongly held moral principles. Our attitude to money or to war, perhaps. In Luke 14.33, Jesus says, "None of you can become my disciples if you do not give up all your possessions". How do we live alongside that? Matthew 5.39, "I say to you, do not resist an evil doer". How do we justify the just war theory with some of these statements?

We live creatively with Scripture, and we seek to interpret it generously and conscientiously. Jesus made no direct references, as far as I can see, to same-sex relationships. Why, of all the things we could be divided upon, should this be the one for separation? Friends, we have, of course, profoundly different perspectives on how to weigh the precious gift of Scripture, yet have managed just about to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, knowing we will all be judged for our stewardship on the last day.

And all this we do in obedience to Jesus, who was unboundaried in His love and risked everything for us, no protection for Him, so that the world might believe and hear the good news. We are not, nor will be, of one mind in these matters, but I urge us not to vote for structural differentiation or seek to impose our will on the conscientiously held views of others, but to recognise our shared love of Scripture, our common desire to make Christ known, choosing rather to reclaim the spacious generosity for which the Church of England was once justly famed.

Dr Neil Burgess (York): This my maiden speech. I am picking up some of the previous speakers' points, because I wonder if it might be helpful to reflect for a moment on the

relationship between truth and integrity. I hope we all regard truth as objective and unique, not least because our Lord described himself as the Truth. And I hope, in fact I am confident, we all want to act with integrity in the sense that we are being consistent with our firmly held moral and theological views.

So while we agree on many aspects of truth, we are clearly divided on the truth of God's teaching on sexuality and marriage. I believe GS 2328 glosses over this division, and, perhaps worse, it fails to honour the integrity of those on either side of this debate. It offers crumbs and restrictions to those who favour change and who want it sooner. And it undermines the committed beliefs of traditionalists, especially around the authority of Scripture.

You probably spotted there has been a concerted effort, I think, to throw in the word "delay". Delay, delay, I wish I had that in Synod bingo before the start of this talk. It reminds me of Proverbs 19.2, actually, "Desire without knowledge is not good". We do not have all the knowledge we need. "How much more will hasty feet miss the way?"

Sisters and brothers, this amendment is not a delaying tactic, despite the fact that "delay" is thrown out a lot. It is not a delaying tactic, in fact, I suggest it is the opposite of a delaying tactic. It improves the motion by more clearly respecting the depth of our different views on truth by honouring our personal integrity and by offering a more timely, full, and final resolution to the arguments that hinder our mission and that damage our life. Brothers and sisters, I urge you to support this amendment.

The Chair: We have heard six speeches, three in favour, three against, and I am minded to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 37 has been sufficiently debated.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried, so we move to vote on Item 37.

The Revd Canon Julian Hollywell (Derby): Point of order. Chair, once again, because of the importance with regards to the overall process, might I ask if you are minded to test the mind of Synod as to a counted vote by Houses, please?

The Chair: Yes. Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, so there will be a counted vote by Houses on Item 37.

The vote on Item 37: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 13, against 26, with 1 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 81 in favour, 103 against, with 4 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 90 in favour, 10 against, with 1 recorded abstention.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chair: We now move to Item 38.

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford): Point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mr Matovu?

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford): I appreciate, Chair, that you indicated at the outset that you had considered Standing Order 28, but you had not yet received my argument or ruled on it. So, briefly, I say that this amendment contravenes Standing Order 28(1)(b). That provides that an amendment to a motion must be framed so as to form a proposition which is intelligible.

Now, if you read the whole of this amendment that is being proposed, it talks of a timescale envisaged by the motion passed by the Synod in February 2023. If you look at that motion in February 2023, there is no timescale attached to paragraphs (a) to (e) and (g). The only timescale that appears in that motion is under (f). (f) only dealt with monitoring and reporting back in five years.

Paragraph (e), which is the one that said that the bishops should be entitled to further refine, commend and issue *Prayers of Love and Faith* did not have a timescale attached to it. So, in my humble submission, this amendment, the proposition, does not make sense. It is not intelligible in a form where all of us can be confident as to what it actually says and means as regards a timescale.

The Chair: Well, I am very grateful to you Mr Matovu, for raising this point of order, and I am really grateful that you gave the Clerk notice yesterday that you were going to raise it and indeed asked when you should raise it, and I indicated that you should raise it before the Bishop of Oxford moved his motion, and you are doing so at the right time.

You will understand, as I said in my opening remarks that I really did carefully consider not only the effect of Standing Order 25, which you raised in relation to the main motion, and which I determined in writing, but I also considered the points raised on whether Standing Order 28 had any materiality in relation to any of the amendments.

I have had the opportunity overnight to reflect carefully on what you were going to say yesterday, and have said today, and I have considered that, and I remain of the view that the amendment at Item 38 is not contrary to Standing Order 28, so that once it is moved, should the amendment be debated, it will be a matter for the members of Synod to listen to the arguments and come to a conclusion as to whether they support it or not.

So, I am afraid, whilst I respect your entitlement to raise this point of order, I do reject it.

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford): Sir, can I just ask you for clarification as to what do you say it means, so that we can all be clear.

The Chair: I have made my ruling on this issue, and it is a matter for members of Synod to determine what it means, and that is my ruling, Mr Matovu. I have already considered this before. I have considered it again, overnight, carefully, and I am afraid I am still against you and the point of order fails. So, I call the Bishop of Oxford to move the amendment standing at 38.

ITEM 38

The Bishop of Oxford (The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft): Synod, I invite as many as possible in this Synod to gather around this amendment as a positive way forward in our present difficult debate. The House of Bishops has listened, and is listening carefully, to the strong responses to the General Synod papers, which have been evidenced so far in our debate, particularly from our LGBTQIA+ clergy.

There are many bishops who could have moved this amendment. Equally, what I say is of course, not representative, of all the views held in the House of Bishops. As we have heard in this chamber, there was disappointment, and is, that standalone services will not be available at present until the conclusion of a full B 2 process, several years away.

There is concern that opt-in measures will no longer be made available with a simple commendation of the prayers, there is potential confusion about what constitutes a standalone service, and there is a sense from some that we are moving backwards not forwards in our practice.

This amendment was tested on the House of Bishops and received widespread, though not universal, support, and its effect will be to invite the House to revisit the experimental authorization of standalone services. This will enable those services to be celebrated much sooner, and during the Canon B 2 process, and in line with reasonable expectations from the Synod motion in February.

This will, I hope, be well received by those who want to offer such services and take part in them in the near future. It will also give greater assurance to those who plan and officiate. The *Pastoral Guidance* will then provide clear mechanisms for PCCs and ministers to make decisions and to opt in. PCCs and ministers who do not want to come to a decision at this stage on whether to use the *Prayers* will not need to engage.

The amendment provides a reasonable and orderly way of proceeding. The period of experimental use will act as a genuine period of reception, and will also provide a way of testing and reflecting on standalone services in practical, lived experience, which will resource the B 2 process. And I hope greater clarity in this area will mean a clearer background for the important conversations which will continue to take place around pastoral provision.

My own discernment is that we are moving forward, necessarily, one step at a time to build a new settlement, a new mosaic. And we are all conscious that we are building that

mosaic from broken bits of imperfect pottery, but we are building one piece at a time. My prayer and hope is that we will see the face of Christ revealed in new ways as we move forward in that mosaic, a face of mercy and compassion. So I propose this amendment and urge your support.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): B 2 was proposed in the document that you have before you, GS 2328, because it was felt that it would bring standalone services in the shortest possible time. However, we have heard the concerns of both those who would want to use the standalone services and those who would not want to use the standalone services, and therefore B 5A does provide clarity, particularly around the ability to opt in to using the standalone services. B 5.2 would also, I believe, provide better information for Synod to make their decision around B 2. And because B 5A can run along the same timescale as B 2, I will accept the amendment in the ability for B 5.2 to be able to do experimental services.

The Chair: So, the Bishop having accepted the amendment, the matter remains open for debate. Those in favour? I can see Fiona McMillan. And those against? The Prolocutor.

Ms Fiona McMillan (London): I support this amendment because to reject it is to go backwards for a community like my own, to remove the pastoral provision currently available to bless the relationships of same-sex couples, because there is no service in the Church of England, which can only damage the Church.

Sam Wells has written that “Taken as a whole the Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the Holy Spirit going ahead of the Church and persuading its leaders that their job is not to protect God”. The early Church thinks it must keep its traditions and be suspicious of, for example, incorporating gentiles without circumcision, or relaxing its food laws. But the early Church is eventually convinced by the testimony of those who have seen a better way, the Holy Spirit at work in the gifts of those whose gifts have been rejected.

I have been part of St Martin-in-the-Fields since I was a child. It is a church where LGBTQIA+ people are woven into the community, in the pews and the choir, on the PCC and in the pulpit. One of my godfathers was a gay priest on the staff there. We celebrate committed same-sex relationships. Two of our members recently had their civil marriage blessed in church, and we shared their special moment.

But we do not talk to them about sex any more than we do with any other couple. In fact, we rarely talk about sex, but we regularly talk about the Bible and St Martin’s is flourishing in depth and in numbers as we practise radical Christian inclusion.

Our Sunday international group welcomes people seeking refuge or asylum, some because they are LGBTQIA+ and have faced persecution in their own countries. Here, they come and find community, a safe place to belong, to share and explore the Christian

faith, and we are enriched by their gifts and presence. As Isaiah 43.4 says, “They are precious, honoured and loved”.

We celebrate both their distinctiveness and our shared identity through baptism in Christ. Together we grow in faith. I am also a trustee of Inclusive Church, who believe in a Church which does not discriminate on any grounds, including sexuality. Our network of churches signed up is growing faster than ever, by around 130 churches a year. There is a hunger for God, for radical Christian inclusion, for recognising the Holy Spirit at work in the gifts of those the Church has rejected.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Synod, I urge you to support this amendment.

The Revd Kate Wharton (Liverpool): Synod, I believe we all want the same thing; to test and approve what God’s will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will. As we pursue this goal together, however, I wish to speak against this amendment, and I urge you to vote against it. It seems like a good idea, does it not? Why would we not vote for a trial period, a chance to try things out, to see how it goes?

I want to share a number of reasons why I believe it is, in fact, a very bad idea. How, in practice, would it work? For a period of time, blessings and services could be used, couples would receive a “yes” from the Church, but then at some future time, in theory, the decision could be reversed. The “no” which enquiring couples would then receive would be all the more pastorally harmful.

Presumably only parishes and clergy in favour of PLF would enter into the experiment. Presumably their feedback would be that it is working well and should be continued. It is unlikely that anyone would report back negatively. So, is it in good faith that we would enter an experimental process?

The Bishop of Oxford does not name Canon B 5A, but that is effectively what we are talking about, and yet the House of Bishops discussed and voted against B 5A. In fact, GS 2328 and answers to some questions outline a number of reasons why B 2 is better than B 5A. There we are told that the risk of legal action is greatly diminished if B 2 is used, that the firmest footing for proceedings lies with B 2, that broad consultation across dioceses will be possible with B 2.

Why, then, having been told so clearly that the bishops chose B 2 for all of these good reasons, would we now switch to B 5A? The question of legal advice has already been much discussed in this Synod. The House of Bishops has received such advice but have declined to share it. The House of Clergy has been told that advice cannot be provided to us in time.

These are extraordinary decisions to be asked to make without recourse to such advice. Some of the *Pastoral Guidance* has been provided but not yet all. Can we really proceed immediately with trial services before we have the guidance in full?

I was briefly part of one of the small working groups entitled *Pastoral Reassurance*. I do not know about anyone else, but I am very far indeed from feeling reassured. I believe that to pass this amendment would be pastorally irresponsible, practically irresponsible, theologically irresponsible, and collegially irresponsible. I ask you to resist this amendment.

The Chair: Those in favour of the amendment? Mandy Ford please. Against the amendment? The Bishop of Chichester.

The Very Revd Mandy Ford (Dean of Bristol): Friends, I have been involved in conversations about *Love and Faith* as a facilitator and a participant since September 2014. Among the aspirations expressed from all sides during those conversations was the desire that the Church of England should be more honest and transparent in its practice, notwithstanding the issues on which we disagree, and I believe that aspiration to be one of the drivers in producing the *Prayers of Love and Faith* which we are now being offered for an experimental period.

Friends, let us be honest with one another, these *Prayers* are not experimental in any real sense of the word. Without the provision of standalone services, they are a retrograde step that provides parish and cathedral clergy with less freedom than they have previously enjoyed. And lest anyone be living in ignorance, let us also be transparent about the fact that numerous people, of whom I am one, have had a service of thanksgiving following a civil partnership in their own parish church with the full knowledge of the diocesan bishop for more than 10 years.

And in that time, as far as I am aware, not a single clergy person has been disciplined for conducting such a service. That is because we have been a Church of grace and generosity in difference. We all know that the presenting issue before us, namely the *Prayers of Love and Faith*, is a proxy for deeper underlying differences concerning our interpretation of Scripture, our understanding of authority and our vision of the Church.

And yet in other aspects of our communal life, we accommodate deep differences: in our theology of headship, of Holy Communion and of salvation. Since the Elizabethan Settlement we have accommodated these differences, because some of us believe that the Church of England is richer as a result. I support this amendment, and I urge the bishops to move rapidly on the provision of standalone services for an experimental period under their own discretion.

The Chair: The Bishop of Chichester, please.

The Bishop of Chichester (The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner): Some identity definition to begin with. I am an Anglo-Catholic. It is my family, not my tribe, and LGBTQI+ laity and priests have always been integral to this family. They taught and inspired me; I respect and love them still.

And my opposition to this amendment does not in any way diminish that. LLF services introduced on a trial basis could never be subsequently withdrawn, that would be pastorally catastrophic. So this is a quicker but divisive way of achieving their introduction. Their use would, once again, turn our attention to the *Pastoral Guidance*. I understand the iterative process that is now envisaged, but it nonetheless must draw on more substantive theological understanding, e.g., the theological rationale, Annex H in GS 2328.

This statement makes no attempt at a scriptural and theological assessment of physical intimacy between people of the same sex, which is how we should account for the reality that these LLF *Prayers* seek to articulate. The problem is highlighted by the rationale statement that, "Like all doctrine, the doctrine of marriage is practical". It is that, but it is much more.

Doctrine is what inspires adoration of God, martyrdom and mission. And it is eschatological, asserting that what we are and do now is orientated in some intrinsic way to eternal reality. So embodiment is important, whatever your sexual orientation. It is why we should pay attention to how we use our bodies, which are "temples of the Holy Spirit", 1 Corinthians 6.19, and care about their destiny. "Oh, how glorious and resplendent, fragile body, shalt thou be when endued with so much beauty, full of health and strong and free" in the words of Thomas à Kempis.

This is more than devotion, it determines the Christians' response to the mutilated bodies of every war zone, to safeguarding, to the care of people with special needs and to the beginning and end of life issues. The theological rationale for the use of these LLF *Prayers* needs much more, further elucidation, and without that, on a trial basis, it would demean their purpose. I urge Synod to oppose this amendment.

The Chair: Can I remind members that if they voted online yesterday but are now here in person today that they will need to reactivate their card, and do that by contacting the information desk. I am going to go now to somebody on Zoom, Gini Williams. Gini, are you for or against this amendment, can I just be clear?

The Revd Gini Williams (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): For.

The Chair: That is a bold voice. Right, so can I choose somebody who is against the amendment? Gini, you carry on now.

The Revd Gini Williams (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich): What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. In uncertain times,

and I have had many, this Scripture from Micah comes back to me, as it did preparing for this debate. And I wonder how well we can say we are doing. From where I am sitting, I do not think we are doing so well. This debate, especially yesterday, was not showing much evidence of justice and kindness.

Frankly, I am shocked at the lack of empathy and compassion shown to people who over and over have told us of their pain and distress, people a majority of us voted to apologise to and yet are still the subject of prejudice within the Church. People who are seen as misled and misguided by those of us who support them. It grieves me to say “us and them”, as I see no differentiation - we are all people - and Paul himself sees the separation of people null and void after Christ’s incarnation. His letter to the Galatians: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”.

This is not a whim, it is not wokery, although, as the Bible tells us so often to stay awake, I cannot for the life of me understand why being woke is such a problem. I do not have to tell you that there is so much more that needs our attention at this moment, not least our young people traumatised by war and environmental damage. Our young people are taught those principles taught by Paul in secular schools, yet seeing the institutions which are supposed to be nurturing them, institutions such as the Government and the Church, disregarding those same principles. When I asked my 17-year-old what he thought about this debate his response was, “I thought the Church was meant to represent love and compassion rather than the hate of certain individuals who are just living their lives as well as they can”. When I asked why he used the word “hate”, he likened it to racial segregation. Prejudice is restricting access to certain rights and places enjoyed freely by others.

As for humility, it has been repeated over and over again that the faithful engagement with Scripture has led even the most learned among us to come to different conclusions. In humility, surely we have to acknowledge that none of us knows the full truth and the mind of God, and surely we always have more to learn.

Jesus said, “I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on his own but will speak whatever He hears, and He will declare to you the things to come”. Surely a just, merciful and humble response, a pastoral response such as the one presented to us, is the way to go. Let us test it and see.

The Revd Joy Mawdesley (Oxford): As a member of the clergy in the Diocese of Oxford, I find myself in an uncomfortable position speaking against the Bishop of Oxford’s amendment and urging you all not to support it. I have actually been moved to speak by the comments on Monday of both the Archbishops and the Bishop of London. I was surprised to hear at that point that they would be supporting this amendment. Yesterday, the Bishop of London said that she listens to Synod, yet she stated her support for this amendment before listening to this debate.

It concerns me that, on the one hand, we are being told that GS 2328 includes all the advice, legal or otherwise that we need, and yet it seems that it can be swept aside in an instant and standalone services offered, albeit on a trial basis, without waiting for the approval of Synod under Canon B 2.

May I remind Synod of the reasons why the bishops concluded that B 2 was the appropriate way to go. These are just some of them. "It will provide the firmest footing for those using the services within the shortest possible timeframe". "It will provide reassurance concerning legal challenges whether you wish to use the prayers or whether you don't". "It will provide time to set up important safeguards, the Independent Reviewer, complete *Pastoral Reassurance* work, explore structural pastoral provision".

B 2 is the right process because this matter relates to the doctrine of marriage, so it is a serious matter, not a thing indifferent, and Synod must be enabled to take a view on this as it relates to standalone services. In my mind, to make such services available on a trial basis would be to put things all the wrong way round. My concern is for clergy on all sides of the debate. It is on the ground, day-to-day, that the issues will play out. We have already been told that the risk of legal action cannot be removed all together. We know that at the moment, hopefully for not much longer, we still have a clergy discipline process that is not fit for purpose if someone complains.

Bishops, for those who have confidence in GS 2328, hold fast to it. Clergy, do not rush something that will make you vulnerable with so many matters unresolved. Laity, support your clergy, protect them via due process. I urge you not to support this amendment, thank you.

The Chair: I am looking for two more speakers before I move a motion for closure. Those who want to speak in favour of the motion who have not spoken since yesterday lunchtime?

Ms Sammi Tooze (York): As a member of the Liturgical Commission, I welcome this amendment. Worship is a vital part of Anglican identity in its many forms, enabling people to come before God at important moments in their lives. We have many liturgies authorized and commended, which are both pastoral and missional, shaping us in our theology, holiness and Christ-likeness. The LLF resources will enable us to reach so many, especially younger people, and those who feel excluded from the Church. With these drafts we can meet people where they are at in different contexts and explore where God is in their lives.

However, the GS 2328 proposals do not enable us to do this. In commending the *Prayers of Love and Faith* to be used within regular worship but not as standalone services until authorized by Synod, we are creating a pastoral and a practical issue.

Theologically, the blessing is exactly the same in both contexts, but pastorally for the couple in question it makes a massive difference between the Church offering a welcome which is joyful and something which is far less genuine.

Following Canon B 2 straightaway also contradicts the synodical vote in February, stating that once the *Prayers* have been commended and published to report back to Synod in five years' time. I do not believe it is possible to report back to Synod fully with only the commended *Prayers*, as without standalone services we will not have the information to report back sufficiently. This amendment enables those who choose to joyfully affirm and celebrate the goods of same-sex relationships to do so straightaway alongside the commended Prayers, and enables us to make a positive change and to see the Church move forward in humility and boldness.

Like many others in this room, I have friends waiting and hoping for their same-sex relationships to be blessed. These stories are common, and by simply offering commended *Prayers* within existing regular worship we are not upholding either the February Synod vote nor pastoral kindness, or authentic belonging. Whatever our theologies, we have the same core journey of faith to become more like Jesus in all we are and all we do. We are to love our neighbours as ourselves.

I think we can agree that at this stage we are not here to change one another's minds, but the love that Jesus teaches us is about having the grace to create safe spaces to each express our theologies. This amendment allows us, in all humility, to think of others before ourselves and to understand that difference might mean voting to enable others to have a space where they can inhabit their theologies which might be different from our own.

Synod, I urge you to support this amendment and the motion.

Mr Benjamin John (St Albans): Living in Love and Faith can be summarised in four words: "Did God really say ...?" As Canon B 30 says, "The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage in its nature a union ... of one man with one woman". We have had years of sowing doubt about the goodness and beauty of God's pattern for marriage. We have lost confidence in the Bible and what it teaches. We have doubted whether this really was our Lord's teaching: "Did God really say ...?"

We have needed faithful and clear leadership proclaiming the beauty of marriage, the glorious picture of Christ laying down his life for his bride, the Church. It is a wonderful truth. We have a beautiful Gospel. We have a glorious hope. Yet instead we have contradictory hopes. We have "pastoral provision in a time of uncertainty". Instead of proclaiming the will of God clear in Scripture we say, "What is God doing? What is the Spirit saying?"

This is a blasphemy against the holiness and power of God. I have been struck, speaking to a group outside from X-Out-Loud who have described to me the transforming work of God in their lives, and they said, "These blessings are curses".

Bishops, at the end of your ministry do you want to be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith", or will you reject it and make a shipwreck of your faith? Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, "You know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus, for this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality ... For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this disregards not man but God".

The Chair: I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 38 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 38

The motion was carried on a show of hands.

The Chair: We proceed to a vote on Item 38.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): Point of Order.

The Chair: Just come to the microphone. I have understood you to be saying you want a counted vote by Houses.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): How did you guess, yes. Yes, a counted vote by Houses, please.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr KC (Guildford): Point of order.

The Chair: I think I have to deal with the first point of order first. Do I see 25 members standing? I do, so I will order a counted vote by Houses. Mr Hofmeyr, what is your point of order? Can you come to the microphone, please, and then it is recorded and those on Zoom can hear?

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr KC (Guildford): A point of order under Standing Order 25(1)(b). Now that it is patently clear from the Bishop of Oxford's speech and the Bishop of London's response that this is a motion dealing with Canon B 5A, my submission to you, Chair, is that it is a motion which proposes a course of action contrary to or substantially inconsistent with a decision made by Synod in February.

The Chair: Mr Hofmeyr, you know that I have already considered this in a ruling which I have given in writing, which is available from the desk. That related to the main motion not to this amendment. I have already considered, as I said in my opening remarks, prompted by looking at Standing Order 25 in relation to the main motion, that was what Mr Matovu raised with me, it also led me to consider whether any of the amendments contravened Standing Order 25 as well.

I am satisfied that my decision in relation to that is correct. The Bishop's amendment asks the House of Bishops to consider issuing a standalone service, possibly on a trial basis. When the Synod considered these *Prayers* in February, the *Prayers* had not been separated into three different sections, as is now proposed, and therefore a decision on the authorization of the approval route for each proposed section was not considered at that group of sessions. Accordingly, the proposed amendment here is not in the same form, or in a form which is substantially to the same effect, as either the main motion or an amendment considered in February. And that is my ruling.

We move to a vote by Houses on Item 38.

The vote on Item 38: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 25, against 16, with no recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 101 in favour, 94 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 99 in favour, 98 against, with 2 recorded abstentions.

It is our tradition to receive votes in silence and there is a reason for that. So, the amendment is carried.

The motion was put and carried.

(Interruption from the public gallery)

The Chair: Can you please be quiet? I am going to adjourn until 11.10 and you can all get your refreshments until then. Thank you very much.

Because I was so rudely interrupted before, I want to remind members of the public that members of the public are admitted to the sittings of the Synod under the terms of its Standing Orders. The Standing Orders require that members of the public remain silent when in the hall, and, therefore, I want to remind people in the public gallery that they must not interrupt or disturb the proceedings of the Synod. I think that is probably enough and all I need to say.

ITEM 39

The Chair: We move now to Item 38, sorry Item 39. My eyes are failing me. The Bishop of Guildford, although his name is spelt incorrectly in the Order Paper. You have three minutes.

The Bishop of Guildford (The Rt Revd Andrew Watson): "B 2 or not B 2?" that is the question. Indeed, that has been the question underlying many of the twists and turns of the past 15 months, and, indeed, the twists and turns of the past 15 minutes; ramping up the divisions among us and encouraging a culture which all too frequently falls short of the *Pastoral Principles* to which we are all signed up.

And “B 2 or not B 2?” is the question at the heart of my amendment, which argues that the *Prayers*, along with the standalone services, should be given the full B 2 treatment sooner rather than later, not least so that Synod can decide whether their refining, to which the bishops were committed by section (e) of February’s motion, has met the criteria of the Cornes amendment in section (g).

The irony is that, like the day of the Lord, the day of B 2 will come, for to change the image from the Holy Scriptures to Michael Rosen’s book *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*, “We can’t go over it, we can’t go under it. Oh no, we’ve got to go through it”. Unlike the day of the Lord, we might have some choice as to exactly when that day will arrive, but without tearing up the rule book of the Church of England altogether, arrive it must, preferably in this quinquennium of the General Synod so as not to leave our successors to go round the circle get again. How good would it be if that day were not to be accompanied by wailing and gnashing of teeth?

For its detractors, of course, the fact that many of us have been banging on about the need to subject a complete package of *Prayers*, guidance and reassurance to Canon B 2 has been seen as a wrecking motion, given that it requires two-thirds majorities in all three Houses of Synod and that looks like a pipe dream right now: cue accusations of delaying tactics. But the truth is, the longer we put off B 2, the more difficult it will be to achieve solid lasting change and such change can only happen if we modulate our current way of working into a quite different key: into a big conversation about the kind of Church that God is calling us to be, and how we are going to get there (and no one is going to get all their own way).

Imagine for a moment a vicar who has achieved a narrow victory in her PCC following a deeply divisive debate and is now planning to go full steam ahead. So how will you advise her? Watch and pray would be my advice. Build a stronger coalition. Get beyond the narrative of winners and losers which will only sow suspicion for generations to come. You will not satisfy everyone, but you cannot afford to lose the trust of almost half your congregation. That is our position too, Synod, which is why whatever we do with this amendment and this motion today, that big conversation must start forthwith.

The Chair: I call upon the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Andrew. It is the present situation that priests are able to pray with and for same-sex couples as a pastoral response. What the House of Bishops has done is agreed to commend a suite of *Prayers* for this as well as for use in existing services. In paper GS 2328, we outline why these *Prayers* do not change the doctrine of marriage. To put the suite of *Prayers* under the B 2 authorization process I think undermines what is presently possible. I also think it undermines the motion that we passed in February 2023, and I also believe it undermines our commitment to reduce the harm that has been expressed

about LGBTQI+ people in the Church and, for that reason, we should resist this amendment.

The Chair: The Bishop having not accepted the amendment, the amendment will lapse unless 25 members stand. I see 25 members standing so the debate on the amendment will continue. Those in favour of the amendment? Andrew Atherstone. And against the amendment? The Bishop of Southwark.

The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford): Liturgy, in all its forms, is hugely significant. Liturgy is one of the primary ways that we express our identity as the Church of England. The words we use in prayer drive at the heart of what it means to be Anglican. So these *Prayers of Love and Faith*, I think we would agree, are not trivial. This is a major watershed moment in the life of the Church of England. The PLF suite is not a private enterprise designed by local parishes. We have heard already this morning that that is already occurring. This is a new step in a significant new direction, because they are going to be formally endorsed as part of our public Common Worship texts. They will be published in the next edition of *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* alongside our wedding liturgies.

The House of Bishops is now proposing to fast track commendation to speed the *Prayers* through without synodical agreement, cutting corners deliberately to save time. When commendation, this process which is outside the Canons, was invented in the 1980s, there was an explicit commitment never to use it for things of controversy, for things of contest amongst us, only ever to commend prayers which are welcomed with acclaim from every corner of the Church. The House of Bishops promised never to pass anything contentious, yet that is the situation we now find ourselves in. It is an entirely novel unwarranted, I suggest, departure from our standard Church of England synodical process.

The Canons lay down the proper routes for agreeing controversial prayers, and they include explicit protections to make sure that the Church of England is not divided, to build consensus and to make sure that one half of the Church does not ride roughshod over the other. One of those protections is to pay proper attention to the voice of the laity. Not just the bishops, or even the bishops and the clergy, but the whole Church. In our Canons, liturgies cannot be authorized by the House of Bishops on their own. The laity must agree. That is a really important synodical principle.

Another protection is high majorities because liturgy welcomed by only one half of the Church will split the Church in half. I want to suggest to you that, for the House of Bishops to commend in December the PLF suite, divides the Church, it silences the laity; it is a novel departure from our established liturgical processes.

If this amendment is defeated by the House of Bishops, as no doubt it will be, I hope the House of Laity, in turn, will use its voice and vote down the final motion and insist, please, upon a better process where the voice of the laity is properly heard.

The Bishop of Southwark (The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun): I want to begin by agreeing with the Bishop of Guildford in what he said about recognising the risk of us as a Synod developing a culture falling short of the *Pastoral Principles*. I do think we should all examine our consciences, especially when we are speaking to one another, because unless we show respect for each other and speak well of each other, we are falling short of our calling as disciples.

The *Pastoral Principles*, which were carefully worked out to help us in a time of uncertainty, hold on to some degree of values which speak of our corporate integrity and our good intentions. Where I want to say something that speaks into all the amendments this morning, and I hope might be helpful for reflection, is that we have only heard mention once (in passing) the word “reception”. Reception is also something which helps the Church. We had a very powerful testament about the importance of the Holy Spirit going ahead of the Church: what the Acts of the Apostles actually attest to. I think we should try to move away from the binary nature of this debate this morning with words like those on either side of this debate, and the “need to address unfinished work needing for further development”. Because that is precisely what reception has helped us distinctively as the Church of England, as part of the Anglican Communion, over the remarriage of divorcées in church and over the ordination of women, and now over this great matter in which I encourage Synod to vote against this amendment and for the motion put forward by the House of Bishops.

The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich): Point of order. Apologies for interrupting the debate, Chair. I have been hearing from members of Synod who were joining in on Zoom that in some areas of the country there is a rather large delay in the video stream and the real time of events that are happening here. May I ask, please, that we have a little bit longer voting period time to make sure that everybody’s vote is counted?

The Chair: Thank you very much for that point of order. We will check with the Synod staff that the technology is working, and we will come back to you as soon as we can. Going back to the amendment, those in favour? The Bishop of Lancaster. And against? Eleanor Robertshaw.

The Bishop of Lancaster (The Rt Revd Jill Duff): Synod members of a certain vintage might remember Sunday afternoons in the 1980s and early 1990s and the ITV gameshow, which was a cross between a pub quiz and a game of darts, *Bullseye*. As my favourite comedian from my home town Peter Kaye put it, “You knew where you stood with *Bullseye*. It were so [bleep] it were good”. Presented by Jim Bowen with his cartoon companion Bully, he was famed for his catchphrases: “Let’s have a look at what you are could have won”, “Are you gonna gamble the Bully? Are you gonna gamble?”

What our House is now proposing to do by authorizing the *Prayers* and standalone services under B 5A for an experimental period starting next month, by a margin of one vote, is quite something. We place a target on the back of every one of our clergy, and

on the backs of those who use the *Prayers* and do not use the *Prayers*. That is why we pulled back from this authorization route. If the *Prayers* are commended for use in the minister's discretion under Canon B 5, it is the minister with the cure of souls who would stand accused. This underpins Appendix F.13.

Perhaps we could argue that this will not be a change of doctrine on any essential matter, but let us be clear, if we bring the *Pastoral Guidance*, which includes pastoral provision for our clergy to enter same-sex civil marriage, this is a change of doctrine. As I understand it, we would lose our exemptions under the 2010 Equality Act, which back in 2013 the then Bishop of Norwich had to negotiate with the Government. This would put a target on the back of our lay officers in their workplaces. Some would argue we are already introducing this risk by a Pastoral Guidance at 1.16, where we encourage all our churches to publicise the status of their views on PLF, despite the reality that most of our PCCs are painfully divided over this, in just the same way that we are in every House in Synod. I am really hoping I am wrong, but should we make that gamble today? Clarity is kindness.

I appeal to the House of Laity. We want you to flourish in your workplaces. We want our clergy to be released for mission. We want our churches to be graceful and welcoming. We want to avoid division. We want to be obedient to Jesus. Rather wonderfully, we have this amazing work breadth in the Church of England, after the introduction of women bishops. In many places we have managed mutual flourishing where we disagree on a topic very close to our hearts. But we are united in sharing the good news. I have faith that we can step up to the challenge of mutual flourishing across a bigger theological divide. I have coined a hashtag in our diocese #mutualmissioning.

But right now, this risky route through the Red Sea ahead gambles on drowning clergy of all persuasions, sowing division in our PCCs and threatening our lay officers in their professional lives. I have faith there is a clearer way forward. So Synod, please vote for this amendment and against the amended motion. Under God's immeasurable grace, let us find a clearer and kinder way ahead so we can all flourish and so we can focus on the bullseye: sharing the amazing news of Jesus with our nation.

The Revd Eleanor Robertshaw (Sheffield): Synod, I am really fed up now, and I am going to say it in a nice Yorkshire accent, too. I am trying to knit a jumper to put the tension from this debate from me, and yet the tension in my knitting is getting all wrong.

I want to refer you back to what I said the other day. We have been at this discussion for hours now. We are going over the same ground that we went over in February, and each of our amendments is delaying and delaying and delaying. If I had the courage, I would call next business, but I do not have the courage to do that. Can I remind Synod that this opportunity to debate is an opportunity that we are privileged to afford. Please can we not forget that there are so many other important things going on in our society that we should be speaking out and helping with, but instead we are just arguing over semantics and arguing over where we are going to be in the future.

I want to include the voices of everybody in our Church, but as we do this we are actually not hearing or acknowledging so many people in our church who are struggling today, and will continue to struggle in a society where the poor and the meek are marginalised.

The Chair: I am looking for two more speakers, one in favour and one against.

Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely): We keep hearing there must be no more delay. Let us look back over this year to see the results of haste. In February, we had no theological rationale for the proposals. Instead reliance was placed on a legal argument about civil marriage which is now recognised to have been flawed. Meanwhile a step change in the Church's teaching on the proper context for sexual intimacy was announced.

In November, it is all different. We find ourselves without the note of advice from the Legal Office, a recommitment not to change the Church's teaching on sexual relations and a theological rationale for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* which as far as this Synod is concerned is three weeks old - sorry, three and a half weeks old. The Church of England has in the past prided itself on being a theologically responsible body. This year, we have been zigzagging this way and that.

Now, suddenly, we have a new insight into doctrine, a new concept, a pastoral provision to guide public liturgy and a new way to frame how our doctrine relates to our pastoral practice, all largely unexplored concepts. Meanwhile, on a lynchpin issue, we have had cursory and partial legal discussion, and no theological rationale for distinguishing between essential and inessential aspects of doctrine.

Without the benefits of the Canon B 2 process, I, for one, fear we will find in six months' time that a new set of unintended consequences and unanticipated problems has arisen from this hasty theological innovation. Sisters and brothers, let us behave like a theologically responsible body.

But there is more. Liturgy approved under Canon B 2 produces, in the House of Bishops' own words, a "clear and robust outcome". It is the perfect antidote to the emergence of a culture of fear, which Bishop Sarah rightly urged us to avoid. It is, as we have heard already, unprecedented to commend liturgy which is novel, controversial and divisive for use under Canon B 5. I understand that many are deeply concerned that a two-thirds majority for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* might be unachievable, as I hope you heard yesterday. I think we are now beginning to get somewhere. The two-thirds threshold is a mechanism to preserve unity through periods of uncertainty and should not be discarded if we want to pay more than lip service to unity. At the very least, it would allow time for parallel work on *Pastoral Reassurance*, which has been promised but not yet provided; for formal structural pastoral provision to help us secure pastoral stability and manage better the shape of the way forward if we cannot preserve our unity under the umbrella of Canon B 2.

The Bishop of Dudley (The Rt Revd Martin Gorick): Yesterday was a hard day. I heard it said that this might only affect 40 couples a year, so why bother, but Jesus said, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without my heavenly father knowing it". This concerns real people. If I opened the scroll of the original Gospel of John and rolled it out in the middle of this hall, at the its centre you would find the words of Christ, "I am come that they may have life, and that they might have it more abundantly".

As a church leader, I know I will be held to account if I have denied that life to even one of God's little ones. Many have pleaded for an honest discussion about same-sex marriage under Canon B 2. As a so-called "progressive bishop" - my children might disagree - I argued for exactly the same about this time last year, but many of the same groups pleading for it now shouted it down on public media at that time.

In my long experience before this time as a parish priest, the House of Bishops has long been very confusing and frustrating to me, so it is quite a laugh really that I am now a part of it. In 1991, they asked me to stand alongside, in the fellowship of the Church, same-sex couples who formed faithful committed relationships, including the physical expression of that love, specifically stated in *Issues in Human Sexuality*. I did that faithfully for 14 years although that spaciousness was for laity only.

In 2005, when civil partnerships came into law, I thought we could finally celebrate this more officially, but I instantly had a letter from my bishop quoting the House of Bishops forbidding me to pray with such couples in church, lay or otherwise. Eighteen years on, you can see why I feel rather frustrated. I love and respect my brother Andrew, but I ask you to resist this amendment, as it delays further where we are seeking to move together as bishops.

Sisters and brothers, whatever your views on this, we have been shown a yet more excellent way. We are called to be and remain the body of Christ, where each member is truly a gift to the other, especially those who might be seen in the body as more dishonourable, as Paul put it, or more difficult we might want to say. They are a gift to us, too. Our love may grow cold. We may become irritable, arrogant or rude, but thank God that He is as He is in Jesus, that somehow His inestimable love is patient and kind. Let us inch forward together in love and faith.

The Chair: I want to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 39 has been sufficiently debated, and I therefore put a motion for closure on Item 39.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried.

May I deal with the point of order raised by Graham Kirk-Spriggs? I am informed that the voting company Lumi has confirmed that those joining on Zoom are not experiencing a delay with the livestream on Zoom and therefore are voting at the same time as those in

the chamber. Those who are watching on YouTube may see a slight delay on this stream, but those watching on Zoom are not watching a delayed stream, so I think there is not a problem.

We move to vote on Item 39.

The Revd Julian Hollywell: Point of order. Chair, a number of references have been made to the Canons, and that is of great importance. Can I ask you consider a counted vote by Houses, please?

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, so we will have a counted vote by Houses on Item 39.

The vote on Item 39: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 13, against 27, with 1 recorded abstention. In the House of Clergy, 90 in favour, 103 against, with no recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 93 in favour, 104 against, with 3 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 40

The Chair: So we move to Item 40.

The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford): This amendment, like others, seeks clarity. This is not just for Synod members who want to understand how all the working parts of PLF fit together, but, crucially, for ordinands and those in the discernment process who need to know the terms under which they will engage with ministry. *Issues* has been marked for retirement but until part 3 of the Pastoral Guidance has been issued, it is still the only framework available. Clarity was promised in February, but nine months on we are still waiting.

So right now, ordinands are looking ahead to the summer of 2024 and wondering whether their call to ministry will fit with the, as yet, unpublished *Pastoral Guidance* on ministry. People entering the discernment process deserve clarity on what to expect. And there are those people who are not able to enter the discernment process.

Let me tell you about Jo. Jo is on the PCC at St Andrew's, one of the churches to which I am licensed as associate. Jo is young. Jo is very bold about sharing faith. Everything in fact I think the Church of England hopes to embody. Jo is thinking about vocation and spent time helping me glitter paint staff and students' faces during Freshers' Week this year. Jo has always seen marriage as the marker of a stable and committed relationship and so was delighted to be married earlier this year. On the current timescales facing Synod, Jo now faces an undefined wait before she and her wife will know if she is even allowed to start those conversations about ordination, and her trust in the unequivocal

apology and promise of radical welcome and inclusion to LGBTQIA+ people offered in February is wearing thin.

Of course, Jo is not the only person stuck in limbo waiting for *Pastoral Guidance* to allow or deny her the opportunity to explore that vocation to ordained ministry, but she is the one I am working alongside whose pain and frustration I witness. Jo and all the others deserve the dignity of clarity. All our ordinands, and those exploring a call to commit their lives in ministry, deserve to be told what is expected of them.

I urge you, Synod, to support this motion, to give a clear timescale for the publication of the *Pastoral Guidance of Ministry*, and I move the amendment standing in my name.

The Chair: I call upon the Bishop to respond

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you very much. We very much recognise the concern of all those who are impacted by section 3 of the *Pastoral Guidance* in a whole range of ways, but particularly for those who are involved in the discernment process. We have said that we will bring section 3 as quickly as possible, hopefully by the spring, and however much I am tempted to give a deadline for my successor - William Nye is also twitching behind me as well at this moment, despite the fact that is quite fun - I have to say that I think it is unrealistic to put such a deadline in a motion, not least because we do need to involve people in the development of section 3, as highlighted by my niche Archdeacon of London yesterday, so I will resist this amendment.

The Chair: As the Bishop of London 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. Yes, I do see 25 members standing.

Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle): I want to speak in favour of this amendment, and I speak in favour of this amendment as lay ministry development officer for the Diocese of Newcastle. As part of my job, I travel the length and breadth of Newcastle Diocese meeting laity and clergy where they are in their parishes and in their communities. Lay people have lots of different ideas about where the Church of England should go, not just on matters of LLF, but also what kind of coffee we should have after a service and what kind of biscuits we should get when the bishop comes to do a Confirmation.

Difference is okay. The majority - not all - of lay people that I meet say, "I thought this was sorted in February, why are you going back in November?" to talk about things that they think we have done. This amendment, I feel, should be supported because it means I can go back to Newcastle, and I can go back to the laity and the clergy right across the length and breadth of Newcastle, those who agree with where we are heading or it looks like we are heading with LLF and those who disagree, and I can say by this date this is what will be presented.

People need to know that we can commit to a date. I think that it is really, really important. Another part of my job is looking at authorized lay ministry. I am a lay Reader. For vocation as well, we need a date, and it is unfair to let it go on and on without that. I do support this amendment and I urge you to vote for it.

The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TElS): I feel quite conflicted about this amendment because, as the Bishop of London has indicated and the previous speaker, we do need clarity for everyone's sake in order to work out who can come into training next year and all of those things. But I also think that it is more important to take our time to make sure that the guidance says what it needs to say and does the things that it needs to do. Whilst I also hope it will be finalised and published this year, I think it is probably unwise to put a specific date on it.

The other thing from the perspective of theological colleges is there has not been a process of consultation with the TElS so far. Can I just put in a quick plea at this point for us to be part of that process of discernment and discussion?

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester): How many people here have ever worked in a context where you are set a deadline? You know, this boiler needs to be replaced in this school by the beginning of term, or you this policy document needs to be sorted out now. I, in my legal career, was regularly put on a deadline. I vividly remember discussing an adjournment and telling the judge that I was flying in from Houston only the night before and might just be delayed. He was very sympathetic; he said, "We'll start at 2 o'clock the next day". We all have to work to deadlines. We are all habituated to it. I hear that Bishop Sarah was saying, "Well, I am a bit worried about bequeathing this to my predecessor". Sure, okay, but your predecessor has got a bit of time to get up to speed, let us just set the deadline and let us say get on with it.

The Ven. Fiona Gibson (Hereford): I would like to be able to vote in support of this amendment but, frankly, I do share with you, having been involved as part of groups working on this between last February and now, that the amount of work needed and the time it takes means it would just be impossible to achieve within that timescale. To put a specific hard cut-off date will put impossible pressure on those tasked with producing the guidance. We can do this quickly or we can do it well. We cannot do both. Please do not create a hostage to fortune that we will not be able to meet. Please do not support this amendment.

The Chair: I am going to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 40 has been sufficiently debated and, therefore, I put a motion for closure on Item 40.

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

Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield): Point of order. If the Chair would please consider a counted vote by Houses.

The Chair: Yes, do 25 members stand? I do see 25 members standing.

The vote on Item 40: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 8, against 26, with 8 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 78 in favour, 103 against, with 10 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 91 in favour, 101 against, with 5 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 41

The Chair: We move to Item 41 and Mr Margrave, who is online.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Romans 12 tells us for every one body we have many members and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ. Historically, as the established Church, disagreements over the direction of the Church have been decided by the electorate when they elect a Parliament. We do not have an election until 2026, and things have changed since then. I want to hear the voice and views from the pews. Let us try something new. That would help us move past this impasse.

Right now, we have division. The House of Bishops cannot agree. The Synod, in reality, is made up of lots of small quasi-political parties or groups that are unlikely to change their minds. Many people are instructed on how to vote *en bloc* via WhatsApp groups. It is an illusion of discernment or democracy. It is a charade. The whole synodical process is broken. Just look at how votes by Houses is being used. We are two irreconcilable groups. The Shared Conversations and now LLF have cost a fortune. A referendum would be cheaper and get this resolved once and for all. I do not want delay. Let us have a referendum immediately and make a decision. We cannot go on like this.

The Holy Spirit is not confined to General Synod or Church House. I would like to see a referendum of everyone already on our electoral rolls to ask them whether we should uphold the doctrine and teachings inherited, or if we want doctrine change or whether people want LLF to move forward. We cannot solve this alone. The answer is not to do backroom deals or become lukewarm because Jesus spits out the lukewarm. Compromise is not the answer.

Let us ask the whole people of God in our Church. In the worst case, we get better data because the LLF data was flawed because very few Church members responded, and we would have an indication of the whole mind of the Church and that cannot be a bad thing. Please, support this referendum and let us listen, not dictate, when planning what comes next.

The Chair: The Bishop of London to reply.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Sam. As a result of the *Living in Love and Faith* process, we received over 6,000 responses from right across the breadth of the Church. These responses were reflected in the document, *Listening in Love and Faith*. For those who know these sorts of things, this was a significant response. These responses, the study of Scripture, the theological, legal and pastoral reflection, were considered as part of the Bishops' Response presented to Synod in February 2023. There will, of course, be with the process of the B 2 authorization, a process wherein which the dioceses will be consulted. Therefore, I resist this amendment.

The Chair: As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I do not see 25 members standing and so the amendment lapses.

ITEM 42

The Chair: We move to Item 42.

Ms Jayne Ozanne (Oxford): Chair, in my attic at home I have a large polystyrene cross with the words, "Bishops' Human Sexuality" inscribed on it. It is a 20 year old relic from an old Synod review held when I was on the Archbishops' Council, the stage for which had been decorated with tombstones referencing key reports debated during that quinquennium which were then auctioned off for charity. I jokingly offered £50 for this one on the condition that a question mark was added, and so one was quickly drawn on in lipstick. Many Synod members knew that I was at the time living by faith and had no income, and so they clubbed together and bought it for me.

What most did not know, however, was that I was struggling with my own sexuality and going through conversion therapy as I believed, as did all those in my church circle, that being gay was incompatible with my faith and that I would, therefore, never know the love and intimacy that I craved. What virtually no one knew was that, previous to my time on Council, I had spent over six months in hospital following a breakdown, where my body had completely cracked under the stress of the inner conflict between my faith and my sexuality.

What no one, including myself, would know was that, five years later, I would yet again be rushed into hospital with my body suffering excruciating pain, taking me yet again to a place where I questioned whether I could continue living. I survived. Many, sadly, do not. There are far too many testimonies of LGBT people, particularly young LGBT people, whose lives have been ruined by their Church's teaching that tells them that if they act on their desires they will go to hell. Many seem so indifferent to our pain, believing that we have brought this trauma on ourselves.

In evangelical circles, this matter of sex outside marriage is known as a First Order issue, one that is foundational to our faith and that is up there with other credal matters. As I understand it, it is this belief that stops certain parts of our Church from giving any ground whatsoever on LGBT relationships as they believe to do so is deeply heretical. Indeed, it is this issue that goes to the heart of our differences - that is, whether sex outside of marriage, in whatever form that takes, is a First Order issue or not.

I fear we are destined to stay in this intolerable groundhog day of tennis-like debates until we finally deal with this matter head-on. That is why I am suggesting we need a considered opinion from our bishops as to whether this is, indeed, a First Order credal issue, which I hope would come to Synod at the earliest opportunity. I think it is critical that we settle where we, the Church of England, stand on this because to continue to fudge it would continue to put innocent lives at risk, and mean we are unclear as to what are, and what are not, core credal tenets of our faith.

The Chair: I call on the Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Jayne, for your words. There are, of course, a range of questions in the Church which are deeply held and are divisive which also are not credal issues. There is, of course, a chapter in the LLF book that talks about the types of disagreements that we have, and also GS 2328 contains our present theological reflections that are the foundation of how we are moving forward. I am almost certain that when the House of Bishops comes back with The Ministry, section 3, that there will be some more theological reflections. However, I do feel that I need to resist this amendment.

The Chair: As the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue. I do see 25 members standing and so the debate continues.

The Revd Canon Andy Salmon (Manchester): Last week, I was asked to record a video for our local primary school. It is not a Church school, but we have a very good relationship with them. One of the teachers wanted a short video from me on, "What is a Christian?" I was pleased to be able to do it and, of course, if you are interested you can find it on our church YouTube video. Everything at Sacred Trinity, we badge as @sacredsalford, if you want to know.

I did the best I could to answer the question of what is a Christian? I said that a Christian is a follower of Jesus, and Jesus came into our world to show us what God is like and to make it possible for us to have a relationship with God. I spoke about the importance of the Bible, the cross and prayer. I said that, as a Christian, I read the Bible and pray every day. I said that Jesus gave us two rules that He said are the most important: love God and love other people. I got all this done in just under four minutes, although not at the first attempt.

My question to Synod is: am I wrong in my summary of what a Christian is? Because some have claimed in this chamber that I am somehow abandoning my ordination vows, and I have heard some very strange claims made about the centrality of heterosexual marriage within Christian doctrine. Alongside the suggestion that I do not take the Bible seriously and am not concerned for Church growth, I find these accusations hurtful. So, in four minutes on what is a Christian, what would you say? It did not even occur to me to say anything about sexual ethics, as I would view this as secondary to our core Christian beliefs. Yes, sexual ethics are important, all ethics are important, but they are worked out from our core Christian faith.

This amendment asks the bishops to give thought to this and to clarify their view. I think I know what their answer would be, but some here claim something else. I do not want this to delay moving forward in offering a fuller and more expansive welcome to people from the LGBTQIA+ community, but please support this amendment so that we can all move forward with clarity about what the essentials of our faith are.

The Revd Jake Madin (York): I am sympathetic to what this amendment is trying to do because I think, as Jayne said, this does get to the heart of our disagreements, but I must oppose it just because of the specific wording of it. I, like many in this room, do believe that sexuality is a First Order issue and that our sexual behaviour and, more specifically, our repentance, does affect our eternal destiny. But I do not know anyone who would argue that it is in the creeds, that it is a credal issue, as the phrasing of this amendment says.

The creeds, of course, address theology proper, the doctrine of God, and our ethics certainly flow out of that. But the creeds do not address ethics. There are lots of ethical issues that are not addressed in the creeds that I think lots of us would agree are First Order issues. It would be hard to imagine any of us would not condemn a Church that condoned genocide or murder because it is not in the creeds, it is not a credal issue. The creeds are not designed to address ethics.

I believe that, although well-intentioned, this amendment sets the House of Bishops up to conclude that, no, it is not a credal issue because, of course, it is not. But nobody is saying that. Indeed, I believe in this group of sessions the Bishop of Gibraltar specifically said in answer to a supplementary question that marriage is not a credal issue but, nevertheless, is a First Order issue. If sex is part of the doctrine of marriage as GS 2328 says, then clearly we have already been given an answer to this question, and so I urge you to resist the amendment and resist the main motion.

The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich): Thank you, Jayne, for your amendment. I also agree that it is focusing on a key issue in this debate, but I want to suggest that there are three problems with it. It is missing the fact that there are, as we have already heard, issues explicitly in Scripture which pertain to our salvation but which are not credal. Indeed, they have not been challenged through the history of the Church and so there

has never been a need to set down because it is explicit in Scripture it touches on salvation.

Secondly, I want to build on the idea of the danger of the majority obscuring the minority point of view. We know that there is disagreement in the House of Bishops and, therefore, if we just have a single definitive statement it is likely to crush the minority view. I have been in this Synod long enough to know that, when you do not pay attention to the minority, it will cause problems.

Thirdly, I want to suggest that, in a time of uncertainty, when people are divided, you are creating uncertainty about salvation. You are commending things which are potentially causing people to miss out on their inheritance in the Kingdom of God. It is that serious and, therefore, requires a precautionary principle.

As has been mentioned, the LLF material does offer analysis of the different ways in which the Church can be divided. Jayne's amendment does not recognise this difficulty. It conflates First Order with credal. I think it would be better if we looked just to what Scripture says about issues touching on salvation. In 1 Corinthians 6, St Paul explicitly links his vice list to not inheriting the Kingdom of God. In Galatians, St Paul, after talking about the fruits of the spirit, talks about the works of the flesh and they result in not inheriting the Kingdom of God. And then, in the Book of Revelation, we find those who are excluded from the Kingdom of God. It includes the fornicators, the *porneia* - the Greek word that, before Jesus and after Jesus, applied to sex outside of marriage.

Of course, there may be different opinions about how this is translated, and this brings me to my second point, which is about the nature of the uncertainty we are in. We may find that there is a majority opinion but we know, because David Cameron is back in the news, that there can be votes where people voted very closely and it did not resolve the issue. Brexit did not go as well as even Nigel Farage thought it would.

I remember being in this chamber for the first vote on women bishops, and the amendment that was voted on did not have two-thirds majorities. We went in a slow motion car crash, and the motion failed at the final vote. Really? We should be making proper provision and recognising the minority perspectives.

If you were given, my third point, a chalice, it has ancient writing on saying "poisoned" and then someone said, "But I commend that to you on the basis of new knowledge that it is safe". And then someone else said, "No, that has always been seen as unsafe". And then you find that there is a divided opinion: is this deadly poison or is this wonderful pastoral provision? You find you have a divided group. Would you drink from that chalice?

If you have seen the film *Oppenheimer*, you will know that there is a discussion about whether the detonation of the atom bomb will lead to a chain reaction that will destroy the world. Oppenheimer reassures the General that the experts have worked out that there

is a nearly zero chance of that happening. The General says, "Nearly zero?" Oppenheimer says, "Well, what more do you expect from a theory?" The General responds, "Zero would be nice".

The Revd Jo Winn-Smith (Guildford): We have heard speeches decrying changeable feelings over unchanging doctrine. It has been implied doctrine is unchanging, yet the Church only started getting involved in weddings in the medieval era. It was not until the 1753 Hardwicke Act that how marriages were contracted was regularised, and the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 had a huge impact on making women closer to the equality that men had received in their lives through power and the State.

The Church's understanding of marriage, despite maintaining its importance, has evolved. Meanwhile, denigrating feelings risks falling into the ancient heresy of dualism. Following Greek philosophers, Docetists, Gnostics and others have pushed the notion that mind and spirit were rational, unchanging and superior to feelings which were seen as base, unsteady and sinful. But the Bishop of Chichester rightly affirmed that we are integrated holistic beings of body, mind and soul. Christ's incarnation affirms this, as Gregory of Nazianzus said when he said that, "That which has not been assumed has not been healed".

When people have spoken of their feelings in this debate, this is our other being, the equivalent to what the courts would call impact statements. In the administration of justice, we recognise the importance of hearing from victims, those affected by decisions. In theological terms, we might also call this relating to the spiritual fruits. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we malign those who long in thirst for righteousness, which Christ called "blessed" in the Beatitudes.

As a qualified therapist and registered member of the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy), my ordination Master's research surveyed the impact of civil partnerships and marriages on LGBTQ+ people. Friends, the evidence showed it significantly improved their wellbeing, mental health and human flourishing. Yes, human flourishing, friends, that which Christ promised to his followers - John 15:15.

I find it utterly bemusing when there are accusations of giving in to the spirit of the age, when same-sex couples are begging for the highest standard of marriage, wanting to live up to the aspiration of all married couples: the highest values of commitment, monogamy, exclusivity, faithfulness, loving in sickness and in health, self-giving love. St Paul resisted his contemporary culture of the patriarchal paterfamilias who could have sex with whatever was his property: his wife, his slave, male or female, or a prostitute. St Paul resisted the culture of pagan orgies and prostitution. He resisted the culture of pederasty, but also encouraged the importance of faithful covenant, of marriage as a place for those who want to express their love sexually.

In our contemporary culture, yes, there is a culture of widespread pornography, sexualisation of the young and a culture of hook-ups and sleeping around. People want

to hold to love and covenant and, when we have a belief in faith by justification, it is not how we behave that makes us saved. I support the amendment.

The Chair: I now wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 42 has been sufficiently debated. I, therefore, put the motion for closure on Item 42.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried and so we proceed to a vote.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford): Point of order. Could I ask that the vote be taken as a count of all Houses?

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do see 25 members standing.

The vote on Item 42: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 3, against 28, with 8 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 70 favour, 110 against, with 7 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 85 in favour, 106 against, with 6 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

ITEM 43

The Chair: We move to Item 43 and we move to Mr Margrave.

Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry): Synod, can I begin by thanking the lawyers at Church House and the Chair who have both enabled me to find a form of words that is in order to bring this to Synod today. I have always found Church House staff and the Chairs incredibly helpful, thank you. I had wanted to move a motion that required the House and College, or mandated them, to meet in public where possible and to provide Synod members with more information. I even wanted them to allow observers. Just like any other legislative body, even my local council allows residents to attend, as does every other public body, it is essential for good governance and accountability.

Listening in to debates would also help us with our deliberations, and it might show us what it means by the bishops disagreeing, how many, what over etc. LLF debates, I do not believe, are confidential, and I believe this is an egregious lack of openness and transparency by decision-makers in their deliberations. In going forward, I want that to change. We should have access also to all the information bishops do.

While I cannot mandate them, I would like this Synod to send two messages to the bishops by supporting this motion. One, we do not feel that the House and College of Bishops has been transparent and open in its process so far and we want them to be so going forward. It is not just an issue of confidentiality. Two, we want change. We want

no more secret meetings and bishops should be like the laity and clergy and be open, honest and transparent.

Finally, can I just say, if your legs are a bit numb right now or weary, you need to move a bit. Now is the time to stand, whether for my amendment to be debated or just a bit of comfort, but I would ask that you do it after the Chair asks for 25 members to stand. I ask that you support this motion.

The Chair: The Bishop to respond.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you very much, Sam. We have heard the concerns throughout this Synod about openness and transparency, and the House of Bishops' Standing Committee will reflect on them. Since 2017, LLF has involved over 40 people from across a range of theological traditions who have put together a whole range of resources that now sit transparently and openly on the LLF Hub. *Listening in Love and Faith* was written in response to over 6,000 responses from across the breadth of the Church of England, and following those responses, prayer, theological, legal reflection and pastoral reflection, the House of Bishops brought their Response to Synod in February 2023.

Since we met in February, the House has met some three times, the College of Bishops at least three times and the LLF Steering Group over 14 times. If I am not accurate, it is because I did not read my diary properly last night. At all these meetings, there have been legal and theological contributions and people who have supported us across a whole range of different areas and specialties.

This process has been iterative, as has the development, for example, of the *Pastoral Guidance*. Theology, legal advice and pastoral consideration have been in constant conversation in order that they are integrated. Those who have advised us in all aspects of LLF, including the legal team and the theological team, have contributed to GS 2328. I am satisfied that the advice is accurately reflected within it. Therefore, I do resist this amendment.

The Chair: The Bishop having not supported the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or otherwise indicate that they wish the debate to continue on the amendment. There are 25 members. On amendment 43, who wishes to speak in favour of the amendment? Mr Hogg. Against the amendment?

The Revd Dr Nick Weir (St Albans): Thank you, Chair, for permitting me to give my first speech to Synod. I want to speak about the process for the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. The ends justify the means. It is a famous paraphrase of the teaching of Niccolò Machiavelli. Contrast that with Augustine - Augustine bingo anyone? He said that nothing in itself wrong may ever be done for the sake of attaining a good end. But seeking good by doing a wrong thing is the original sin of the human race - Genesis 3:6. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that

the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate". They sought a good end, wrongly, via disobeying the word of God who said not to eat of that tree.

Original evil may be defined as pursuing good or the good in something in the wrong way. What about the process we are using for the PLF? Well, much has been said about what we are doing with the Canons, the legal advice, the timings, the usage or abuse of the *Pastoral Principles*, listening or selective listening. Are we doing right in this process? Are we following Augustine or Machiavelli? Will we apply the Augustine test to our process? Search your consciences, dear friends. We are all quick to criticise others when they seek good using wrong means, yet we are all tempted to seek good using wrong means when it is beneficial to us - and I am not blameless. But it is not safe for us to do this before God, no matter how good you think the end may be.

Some of you are probably thinking here is another attempt to kick the can down the road; but, no, it is an attempt to stop us doing the wrong thing and to ask us to seek good in the right way. Please, apply this Augustine test to the final motion and I think at this stage we should not support it. Voting for this amendment is an indication that we want a more true and honest process to be followed.

The Revd Professor Morwenna Ludlow (Exeter): I wish to oppose this amendment. It is not, of course, that I oppose openness and transparency, but calls for openness and transparency cut both ways, Synod. We have heard many calls for unity in our debates this week but, as Bishop Philip reminded us yesterday, unity and, with it, transparency and openness are tasks for the whole Church not just our bishops. I want us to take a moment to reflect on one aspect of that unity, which is mutuality. In short, how can we build each other up?

When Basil of Caesarea wrote to a fellow bishop before a Synod in the late fourth century, he begged him to visit so that, "We may converse at leisure with each other and be mutually encouraged through the communion of spiritual gifts". By quoting Romans 1:11-12, Basil was reminding his fellow bishop that mutuality lies at the heart of being one Church. He recalls the gifts of the spirit which, in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4, are repeatedly and emphatically set in a theology which emphasises the unity of the body of Christ expressed in the mutuality of its members. By the way, the works of the flesh include strife, quarrels, dissensions and factions, and that is a judgment on us all. It is not that, going back to the gifts of the spirit, individuals in the Church have different gifts as if we were playing different instruments in an orchestra. Rather, these gifts are given so that we can all sustain each other and build up the body of Christ to be a witness to the good news of Jesus in the world.

These gifts only come alive, as it were, as we exchange them with each other. We are to teach, minister and give to one another. We are to exhort, encourage and console each other. This is the gift of the Paraclete. As Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1, that consummation which comes from God is that with which we are to console each other.

We have heard calls at this Synod for what has variously been called differentiation or provision, especially any arrangements over episcopal oversight and the danger of losing that full mutuality of the gifts of the Spirit, that mutuality which is for Paul the marker of the unity of the body of Christ. However honourable the intentions, however sincere the effort to make them work, we already know that alternative or extended episcopal oversight comes at a cost of that kind of mutuality about which Paul writes. I am not sure that it has always brought transparency and openness either.

Secondly, most plans for structural provision seem to try to alleviate tensions at a local level by placing the burden for communion on the shoulders of our bishops, and I do not think we should make it harder for them.

The Chair: With a view to trying to deal with Item 43 and perhaps proceed to a vote, it probably is necessary for me to ask the permission of Synod to extend the sitting by no more than 15 minutes, but I only want to complete Item 43 if I can. Does that have your consent?

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

The Revd Marcus Walker (London): As I note that David Cameron is back in Government, now might be a good week to say that I am in favour of gay marriage, not despite being a conservative but because I am a conservative. This will mean that I have to have difficult and awkward conversations with fellow conservatives. This means that my vote will be analysed and examined, and anything that I say will be explored, analysed and examined. Two of the Houses of this House have to debate in public, have our votes known in public and that is right, because what we say and what we do is a serious and important matter in this Church.

The House of Bishops should not be meeting and voting in secret. We should know what the matters are that they are debating, how they debate, what they say and why they say it. The Houses of Commons and Lords from whom we get our authority can only meet in secret for matters of national security. The Russians do not care which way the bishops vote, and what the bishops think about this or any other issue. We need the openness and accountability of knowing which way our spiritual mothers and fathers think and vote. It was wonderful to see different bishops standing up and arguing with each other from the depths of their convictions earlier in this session, and I think that the whole of this Synod would appreciate more of that in the future. Therefore, I support this motion.

The Revd Canon David Bruce Bryant-Scott (Europe): This is not my maiden speech. This is my grumpy old man speech. One of the things that has struck me since coming to this province of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England, is the extent of contempt and distrust of our bishops. I think if you speak to people who have been formed in other provinces, you would find that the level which I have experienced here is alien to

them. In other provinces, it seems we trust our bishops. We may disagree with them but, on the whole, we do recognise them as the heirs to the apostles.

Sometimes, like the apostles, Paul or Peter, they do not always get it right. Sometimes, like Paul in 1 Corinthians 7, where he is trying to advise the Corinthians on what to do about marriage, you get the feeling he is kind of making it up as he goes along: it is good for you not to get married but it is better not to burn in sin but, on the other hand, I wish you were all just like me, and you get the feeling he is just making it up. But, no, he is not, he is struggling, and the Holy Spirit is working through him and I believe that the Holy Spirit works through the Church and it is also manifested in our bishops.

I happen to like the two bishops I have in my diocese, I cannot speak for any of you, but I do think we need to give them the opportunity to come together. There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. Secrecy is all about power. The way in which some people here seem to think that if there is a confidential discussion among bishops there must be a conspiracy, they are trying to pull one over on us, oh gosh, get over fear. Perfect love casts out fear. Vote against this amendment. Vote for the main motion.

The Chair: Now I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 43 has been sufficiently debated and I put a motion for closure on Item 43.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried and we proceed to vote on Item 43.

The Revd Julian Hollywell (Derby): Point of order. Chair, given that some of the speeches have indicated this is being taken as a litmus test of the main motion, can I ask you to consider the mind of Synod as to a counted vote by Houses, please.

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? I do see 25 members standing so we will vote by Houses.

The vote on Item 43: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 6, against 24, with 7 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 81 in favour, 99 against, with 7 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 97 in favour, 94 against, with 8 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chair: That concludes this morning's debate. We will return at 2 o'clock to debate the final amendment at 44 and I will see you then.

ITEM 44

The Chair: So, we now come to Item 44. The Bishop of Durham, please.

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler): “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour”.

I could read on from 1 Corinthians 12, but the point is clear: I need you, with all your diverse views and opinions, and, like it or not, you need me. We need each other.

This amendment seeks to affirm our ongoing mutual recognition as God’s gift to one another within the family of God.

I will admit that in life generally I sometimes receive gifts that I struggle to rejoice in, and I wonder what I might do with them, but I acknowledge the kind intent and accept them as a gift. I remain convinced that Peter and Andrew probably struggled to accept Matthew or Simon the Zealot when they were first called, and I am unsure how Joanna might have viewed Mary Magdalene as they supported our Lord together, but they had to learn to see each other as Jesus’s gift to one another.

Our ongoing debates have made clear again the depth of disagreement that exists amongst us on these matters, hence there is a recognition in GS 2328 that there is need for a provision that offers clear confidence for all parties. Indeed, that paper talks about formal structural pastoral provision.

My own amendment has deliberately not used the word “formal” because of concerns that it would be heard and read in a specific manner. I am deliberately proposing “firm” at 2 and then a “clear way” to ensure that we do all recognise that whatever this might look like - and that is still open to the necessary conversations - it must have clarity and confidence for all clergy, PCCs, laity, and bishops on what this provision looks like and how it will work, which ensures confidence, truth and justice for all. I believe this amendment offers reassurance to some, and I do not accept that it would undermine the main motion as it stands in the way I believe some have suggested it would do.

I offer this amendment seeking to ensure that the greatest breadth of members of Synod find themselves then able to vote for the main motion. I move the amendment standing at number 44 in my name.

The Chair: I call upon the Bishop to respond

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Paul. The House of Bishops has been very focused on putting in place the threads of *Pastoral Reassurance* right the way throughout these proposals. It includes opting in, the independent review of the Pastoral Consultative Group, the Bishops’ Statement and the *Pastoral Guidance*, but I know that for some this is not enough. For some to be able to

stay in the Church if the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are commended or authorized, they will want to distinguish themselves from others.

The House of Bishops in the papers GS 2328 have said that we will put together proposals as a matter of urgency for structural pastoral provision. Why? Because for those who find the *Prayers of Love and Faith* difficult or a red line, we would want to enable you to remain in the Church and, yes, it will come at a cost for others of us, but, as we have heard over the last two days, the Christian life is often sacrificial. However, my concerns about the words of this motion is that it may well put constraints on the process of bringing these proposals. I also understand that for those who require some sort of formal structural provision that they will not be able to vote for this motion even if amended, so I will resist this amendment.

The Chair: So, as the Bishop does not support the amendment, it will lapse unless 25 members stand in their places or indicate that they wish the debate to continue. Yes, I see 25 members standing. So, those to speak in favour? Yes, Esther Prior. And those speaking against?

The Revd Esther Prior (Guildford): Like many here, I bear the cost of holding deeply held convictions while loving those with whom I disagree. As someone who holds to the received teaching of the Church, I do so not because I am not listening, not because I am hateful, or unthinking, but because I genuinely cannot see in Scripture a case for revision. I know some people can, but I cannot. What I see is that sex is a wonderful gift given for marriage between a man and a woman, and that singleness and celibacy are not the poor relation.

Having said that, I made a commitment in 2005 to always hold in my heart members of the LGBTQI+ community whilst trying to imitate Christ in his embodiment of grace and truth. I have not swerved from this.

I have LGBTQI friends who share my convictions, and I have friends and family who disagree with me. And I know that holding on to what is seen by the majority of Christians around the world as the received teaching of the Church wounds those who disagree with me, people who I love deeply, and that grieves me, but I pray that it will be my only offence. I pray that I will never be lacking in love, and I hope that those who disagree with me, in this chamber and those listening, please can you accept that I can love you deeply whilst disagreeing with you?

Why am I sharing this? I am sharing it because I think one way of us loving one another through our deep divisions is to really see each other. The Goddard-Goddard principle, I call it. Charles Goddard and Andrew Goddard are two wonderful men who have graciously engaged in conversation about this over decades. They realise that they cannot agree. Please can we move forward with both these men in our hearts and in our sights? Please can we do the difficult work of charting a path where both can walk in freedom and integrity within the Church of England? I think it is time for formal structural

provision, or “firm”, Bishop Paul, for the sake of Goddard and Goddard. Please vote for this amendment.

The Revd Kate Massey (Coventry): Thank you for calling me, Chair, for my first speech in Synod. It was a privilege to be invited to participate in a Living with Difference group throughout September this year. For those who are unaware of this, it was a group of people from across Synod representing different views who gathered to discuss various LLF proposals. It was a privilege because I got to meet a room full of truly remarkable people, each God’s gift to me. It was not unalloyed joy, as we had some tough conversations.

I was in the room not because I was a seasoned campaigner on either side of the sexuality debate. I was there as one of the middle-of-the-road people who loves the Church and longs for it to stay united, even in difference. And I pushed my conservative friends hard on what they imagined by differentiation, which was the word we were using then. I am not breaking any confidences here because everything we said in that room has also been said in public fora. When I asked whether they were looking for some sort of settlement in the style of that provided after we voted for women bishops, they said they needed much, much more. And when I asked at what point differentiation would be needed, the reply was “pretty much any change at all”.

I think it is incredibly important for Synod to understand this. In our deliberations, we are talking as if structural pastoral provision is a *fait accompli*. We have barely mentioned the commitments that the bishops were willing to make to those who disagree in order to protect their place and integrity in the Church. We have barely mentioned the opt-in option which was a considerable concession on the part of those who work for full LGBTQIA equality. We have barely mentioned the Independent Reviewer or Pastoral Consultative Council.

I have significant concerns about how differentiation has worked since 2015, but even I would vote for it, or would contemplate voting for it, if I thought there was a possibility that a reasonable degree of differentiation could result in a meaningful change in our welcome of LGBTQIA Christians. But that is not what we are talking about. The conservative offer is maximum division for minimal change, and that just will not work, and it only makes sense if they do not accept me as a gift.

Synod, we are Anglicans . Despite considerable evidence to the contrary in the past 24 hours, we like to be nice. And this is a seemingly nice amendment. Of course, I recognise my friends as a gift to me, but I am concerned that if we vote for firm provision, we are voting for structural division not provision, which will in turn harm the Church. And while the Bible has some things to say about sexual ethics, it has far, far more to say about unity, and for this reason, I urge you to oppose this amendment.

The Chair: After Jamie Harrison I am looking for somebody to speak against the motion.

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison (Durham): I speak in support. It is a particular delight to follow Kate, who has just spoken to us and who was part of those conversations which I am going to come on to a little bit later. To meet new friends in that context was excellent.

My bishop has proposed an amendment which I think has three particular issues for me, and which are potentially controversial in this chamber.

The first, as we have heard both from Kate and from Revd Professor Morwenna Ludlow, is around the idea of provision. The second is the acceptance that we have differing views. We just to have to look at the voting, particularly in the House of Laity today. And the idea that we are gifts to one another, which not everyone again would accept, although I certainly would, as would my bishop.

The February motion from 2023 clearly stated our commitment as a Synod and our willingness for the bishops to commend the *Prayers of Love and Faith*. That is a given and, whatever we have heard, they are going to be commended in December. So, what happens next? I think that is where Bishop Paul is trying to take us. We have heard in GS 2328 the importance of the potential exploration of what is called formal structural pastoral provision. We know that is also contested.

My experience of the time with Kate and others in those September meetings is that we reached a point at the end where we were very honest in the room. How we interpret that honesty is for each of us who were there, but I think it gives us an opportunity to think whether there is a way forward next which allows us to negotiate some form of settlement that is realistic and (as I call it) doable. But that includes all of us, those in this chamber, and particularly the laity. What was notable in some of the groupings that formed after February was the lack of lay voices in those groups. I am glad to say that, when we met in September, there was a greater sense of the laity being present, but I want that to continue.

We do risk perhaps seeing the bishops as distinct and separate. I do not believe that is what they want to be, and to be seen as, but somehow we need to make a space in which we can have the sorts of conversations that matter.

I have been told there is no appetite for that. I wonder if that is true. I am also aware there are no guarantees. There is no certainty that a settlement can come out of this, but if we do not try, we will never know. So, I ask you to allow this amendment to go on the face of the motion. In doing so, it may allow some of us to vote for it, but, equally, it will be there as a clear statement of a way ahead. Without it, we have no certainties about this desire perhaps for some form of provision (I am not saying how structured), to accept our differences as valid, but also to see one another as gifts.

Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester): I wanted to speak against this amendment because I think it is important that we recognise that structural differentiation, of whatever kind, is not some kind of a fix-all, a way of making everybody happy. We have talked a lot about

unity in the last couple days, and I agree that we are called to be united, but that is not the same thing as being called into absolute agreement.

Like the proposer of this amendment, I want to look to 1 Corinthians 12, and St Paul's wonderful description. I find it quite humorous, in fact, when he talks about feet not being able to say that they are not part of the body. But having differentiation does not allow us to continue as a fully united church. When we move into our separate groups, it will stop the conversation rather than strengthening it. I believe we need to find ways of truly valuing and recognising one another and continuing this journey together.

I speak as a lay person, a lay person who is involved in worship and in ministry as a licensed lay minister in Wythenshawe, which is a large estate on the southern edge of the Diocese of Manchester. In Wythenshawe, we have prayed and thought and studied long and hard about the issues we have been discussing over the past two days. It is several years since we agreed to sign up to the "Inclusive Church" statement, and people back at home will be looking to us here to continue with the progress that they so welcomed in February.

It is important that everyone feels safe as we progress forward, but I think that some of the statements about clergy fears may be somewhat overstated. I do not believe that we are going to start suing each other. After all, did Jesus not specifically instruct us not to do that? We have to continue to walk together, and I think the best way of doing this is to follow the pattern that was established in the settlement around remarriage after divorce.

I have previously stood here and outed myself as a remarried divorcée, so I have skin in that particular game. It seems to me that it is working well. By the grace of my local priest, my husband (who has not been previously married) and I were able to celebrate our love within church. It was a great day of joy for us, and I do not think it diminished those in this chamber who would disagree with the fact that that happened.

So let us continue to walk together, and let us avoid any kind of firm differentiation, so that we can continue this journey together and merely value one another's gifts, and grow in love and in faith.

The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark): The jumper will be on auction for the Gaza hospital after I have spoken. Someone needs to step out of their silo today, and so I am doing that now. I recognise in that that Paul and Vaughan are my brothers, who I respect and have come to admire in their ministry, and I want to speak to them and to those who stand behind them who call themselves evangelicals. It is curious as a reformed church that, in this debate, we have seen Scripture talked about more by progressives and the doctrine and the teaching of the Church talked about by conservatives. It is almost as if the Reformation has been turned round. And also, salvation by works has now become an evangelical doctrine, which is new to me.

It is curious because, as an evangelical, it is my reading of Scripture which informs my doctrine. I come to the conclusion that, because of the teachings of Jesus and the wider New Testament, I am persuaded of the need to revisit the practice, to make us more biblical, not less. I learn from my evangelical formation: I read the Bible and put it into practice. I choose to follow Jesus and seek a modest reform to reflect our own reading of Scripture in the light of our pastoral experience and to proclaim afresh the Gospel.

The last few months since February have seen, in my view, a regrettable turn inwards by many of my fellow evangelicals, and a return to that old chestnut of puritan faith, which is breaking fellowship with those we disagree with. My reading of Scripture, and I refer you to the wonderful commentary by Willie James Jennings on Acts, is that the hallmark of the work of the Spirit, in the creating of the new family of God in Christ, is unity, not, as Matt Beer said earlier, unity of the Scriptures and not, as the Bishop of Chichester said earlier, one part of the family being his part of the family. Bishop of Chichester, we are all part of your family, and not one tribe. And that judgment will come upon those who break fellowship.

I used to be someone who believed that unity could be sacrificed for the sake of justice and biblical interpretation. No longer. Schism is a great sin, and I am afraid what we have heard so far from the Church of England Evangelical Council is advocating schism. I will vote for this motion, but, in doing so, say what you have asked for so far is simply sin; it is schism. A high doctrine of purity should not trump our credal commitment to unity.

So, as a pastor, I say to Paul and Vaughan and those who make considerable sacrifice, I will do that for your place in the Church of England on the same terms as we all share. I will fight for your right to live by your conscience, but I cannot do that in a way that breaks the unity of the Church because you want to break fellowship. That is neither biblical nor Christ-like. I will lay down my life for you as brothers, but I will not lay down my life for your hermeneutic.

We must, friends, though, abandon tribal politics, and my plea is that we do that today by bearing with one another. Evangelicals need to bear some of the weight of this with LGBT Christians because we have borne the weight alone for far too long. Come and join us, and vote for this amendment and vote for the final amendment as proposed.

The Ven. Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool): I want to oppose this amendment on three grounds: from my experience of the women bishops debates and the operation of the Five Guiding Principles in practice, from the experience of our ecumenical colleagues, and from our historical ecclesiology. Rather like Simon, I am baffled by the more Protestant colleagues here who seem to argue for the theology of salvation by works. Like Amanda, I am baffled by more biblically-focused colleagues seeming so willing to take their fellow believers to court. And I am baffled by all the talk of Canons, seeming so willing to set aside Canon A 8, of schisms.

Because it is not as if there has been ever been a time when the Church of England was not divided. We were designed to be a Church that would hold together deeply, even violently opposed theologies, in peace, for the common good. That is why our ecclesiology is not founded on confessional statements beyond the creeds but on a radical commitment to the people of a particular place - a parish, a diocese a country - all the people, whatever their religious or ethical views. To coin a phrase, this is the parish I want to save.

Those of us who sat through the women bishops debates will know first-hand how often and how clearly this Synod rejected any suggestion of structural differentiation, a third province and so on. I am afraid I am increasingly of the view that those who were disappointed by that are still fighting that battle on this front instead. Indeed, that the real endgame for some seems to be to cynically use this issue to achieve major change in our ecclesiology by the back door. We have heard a lot about transparency. If that is what you want to achieve, I suggest you bring it as Article 7 or 8 business, not as some kind of backroom prisoner exchange.

I have seen this happening as a member of the House of Bishops' Standing Commission on the Five Guiding Principles. Resolutions are, sadly, in some places being used to pick a theologically acceptable bishop and declare UDI from everyone else. Very much not the original intention.

This summer, I was one of 10 Anglican delegates to a Roman Catholic consultation on synodality. My fellow delegates in the Baptists, Methodists, Quaker, URC, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches all quoted this issue of same-sex blessings in reflecting on their own synodical discussions. I heard from all of them repeatedly that the one thing they knew was that they were not going to do what we had done over women bishops. They told me they had learned from our mistake in enshrining the sort of thing that the Bishop of Durham is now asking us for in our structures. And they were baffled that we might not learn from it ourselves.

Our structure for holding together is the gift of the parish system. Our unity is based on geography. It will not be achieved by further distinguishing our divisions.

I beg you to resist this amendment and support the main motion.

The Chair: I wish to test the mind of Synod on whether Item 44 has been sufficiently debated. I therefore put the motion for closure on Item 44.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried. So we move to vote on Item 44.

The Revd Julian Hollywell: Point of order. Chair, given the gravity and the far-reaching consequences of the term “firm provision”, can I ask you to test the mind of Synod as to a counted vote by Houses, please?

The Chair: Do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do, so there will be a counted vote by Houses on Item 44.

The vote on Item 44: In the House of Bishops, those in favour 14, against 19, with 2 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 88 in favour, 90 against, with 9 recorded abstentions. And in the House of Laity, 86 in favour, 105 against, with 10 recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and lost.

The Chair: We will take a break to allow an updated version of the main version (as amended) to be put on the Synod App and we will come back at 2.40. Thank you.

ITEM 7 (AS AMENDED)

The Chair: Now we return to the main motion as amended, and we are going to continue a debate on that for a while. Deputy Chair of the House of Laity, you are speaking for, and is somebody speaking against? Mark Ireland.

Mrs Alison Coulter (Winchester): Friends, here we are very nearly at the end of a long debate after several hours, and in this chamber there are still very different positions held passionately by members: those against this motion and those like me in favour. At the end of this long time, it feels like we are at the beginning of a three-legged race and we still have not worked out how we are going to run, so we are hobbling quite slowly towards the start line through the trenches that Vaughan described.

There is an old African proverb - I do not know where it is from, so if someone knows maybe you could let me know - if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together. And I believe we are called to go together to run the race as St Paul describes, as one body, held in God’s grace.

The important challenge we face now is how to go together; what will that look like and how do we do that work. And even after all those debates there is more work to do by talking together - the big conversation Bishop Andrew spoke of. What can we agree on? What can’t we agree on? Where are the lines? I want us to go together, but I accept it will require some difficult conversations and some compromise. I do not think this is only work for the College or House of Bishops. I ask that it involves people from all three Houses, and I support Jamie’s request that we have good lay representation, please, in this work.

I would like to ask that, as we move into this next phase of work, we also give imagination, resource and priority to creating a generous space of relationship and trust. We have put a lot of time and effort into this debate, but I am not convinced it has done much to build relationships and trust. Relationships are really important to Jesus, and I ask that we attend better to these in our work going forwards.

I am very well aware of the pain and emotions in this chamber, for those for whom this is not enough, and for those for whom this is far too much, for those who have found these two days a bruising experience, especially those who have shared their personal stories. Surely most of us can agree that we are tired, and we are slightly wondering why we are still in this place.

But I ask you, Synod, to have hope. We are called to be people of hope, to press forward, determined to run this race to go far, to go together. Please vote for this motion and let us move on and put our efforts into building the unity of our Church, the Kingdom of God, working through our disagreements, holding fast to the things we agree about. Let us run this race together, in love and faith.

The Ven. Mark Ireland (Blackburn): I am deeply troubled at being asked to vote for a motion amended by Steven Croft's amendment, carried by the margin of a single vote in one of the Houses, to enable standalone services to be introduced without delay. To quote Archdeacon Fiona earlier, we can do this quickly or we can do this well; we cannot do both. Theology done in a rush does not glorify God. And so I will sadly vote against the main motion, even though I know this will cause distress to many. I would say to my good friend from Blackburn Diocese, who spoke so movingly last night, that to ask for more time is not about delay, it is about getting it right.

I was in this chamber some years ago when the draft legislation for women bishops fell by four votes. I was one of those who was frustrated and devastated at the time, having longed for it to pass. However, with hindsight, I know that Synod was right then to withhold its consent. The result was further theological work which brought about a much better framework for mutual flourishing, which has made women bishops a gift to the whole Church, and which has endured and stood the test of time.

The other lesson from the women bishops process was that we waited until we had a clear two-thirds majority in all three Houses, and that came about when those who were opposed knew that they had a safe and honoured place in the Church and were able to vote for the final package. That surely reflects what the body of Christ should be about.

There is more work that needs to be done. We were promised a package of documents to consider together, but all we have had is the *Prayers*, only part of the *Pastoral Guidance* (leaving out the difficult issues), and none of the *Pastoral Reassurance* needed to ensure that those who hold a traditional view of marriage know they have a safe place in the Church of England going forward.

The bishops are asking us to trust them and telling us that they will fill in the blanks, but trust works both ways, and trust has not been encouraged in a process where the bishops have not trusted Synod to see the minutes of their meetings, or the advice they have received. I urge us to vote no to this motion today to give us time to get this right, and to create a space where we can all flourish and where we can unite around an agreed package. Theology done in a rush does not glorify God.

The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford): I am supporting this motion because it takes us forward. I want to invite us to take it forward in a new space of imagination. I have been troubled as we have been talking about *Pastoral Guidance* in relation to ministry and having it published. I want the *Pastoral Guidance* in relation to ministry published. I want it open, I want people to be certain of where they are, but the LLF process encompasses identity, relationships, sexuality and marriage. *Pastoral Guidance* on these things in relation to ministry is not restricted to the guidance on same-sex relationships.

Our experience with *Issues in Human Sexuality* shows how unhelpful it can be to frame our guidance around a single issue. This has come to me because I have a Private Member's Motion, which many of you have signed, dealing with ordination following divorce or marrying a divorcée, and we have heard some personal stories of people in those situations as part of the debate.

The outcome of a debate on that subject would require Pastoral Guidance of some kind to be provided, either to meet the current canonical requirement or to provide a proper replacement. We cannot wait until that is done. It has to evolve. It is organic, and it is part of our imagination of what ministry is. If we wanted another issue in this area which we might want to reflect on in *Pastoral Guidance*, pornography, which Synod has debated, is one.

So do vote for this motion, it takes us forward. But let us expand our imaginations, not only in this area but in the area of *Pastoral Reassurance* too, and listen to one another and open our hearts and minds to the possibilities that this new circumstance will open to us. I urge you to vote for this motion.

Mrs Alianore Smith (Southwark): This is my first ever Synod. Lucky me! As a new member of the House of Laity, I am standing against this motion because it does not seem wise or prudent to vote on something as important as this when there is incomplete *Pastoral Guidance* and a lack of transparency around legal advice. I am here representing the laity of my diocese, those living ordinary lives who spend their days faithfully witnessing in word and deed to the good news of Christ's Gospel to those around them; those who are desperate to be faithful to God, to Scripture and tradition, whatever their view on this issue. I am here to represent those people.

To ask for the Synod to vote on a half-baked incomplete piece of work which is, from the papers that I have seen, theologically, pastorally and legally ambiguous, is disrespectful and dangerous. If we are to be able to vote in good conscience on such a matter as this

we must have all the information. We have not been given the chance to fully understand the implications of what we are voting on. This is wrong. If I were to vote for this motion, I could not in good conscience go back to the laity of my diocese, who I am here to represent, and say that I fully knew and understood what I was voting for and its implications. This is not about delaying. This is about clarity, integrity and good process. This is about unity. This is about respecting those we have been elected to represent.

Because process matters. Clarity matters. That is why I will be voting against this motion. I ask my fellow representatives here to do the same. We know we disagree theologically. That is obvious to everyone, even someone whose first Synod it is. But whatever we decide, we should do so with everyone having all the relevant information. Please vote against this motion.

The Archbishop of York (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell): Dear friends, this has been such a painful debate, and it is so hard for those of us who love one another within this Church to have to disagree so profoundly on these things, but I also want to say that, having listened really carefully to everything that has been said, I think it has been a helpful debate and it has been an honest debate, and, nearly always, a very courteous debate, and I thank people for that.

When I spoke the other day, I said there is one thing that unites us: we do not want there to be homophobia in our Church. We disagree about what the welcome should be, but we do not want that. I am thinking of Esther's speech a few minutes ago. Esther, you modelled that for us so beautifully. I thank you for that. That is the spirit I want to have, and I see it in you.

And I saw it in Simon. Simon, it is your last Synod, and you have been such a great servant to this Synod. I saw it in you. That is what I want. I want to say to Synod sometimes we bishops are accused of misusing our power. If I have done that, Synod, I repent and I am sorry. That is not my intention. My intention is to do what we can to work for the good of the whole Church. I continue to believe that we can do that, and I see it in many of the contributions made here, and I am committed to it.

Other things are clear. It is very clear that the votes are very narrow. We have to listen to that. It is very clear that we do need pastoral provision, but that is being woven into this process as it moves along, and there is more to do. We really need that *Pastoral Guidance*. I think it was wise not to put a deadline on it, but we really need it. We really need as a House of Bishops to reflect on whether we are being as transparent as we need to be. I have heard that, and we will reflect to that. That is not my decision, but I promise you in my role as chair of the Standing Committee we will look at that. I will be turning to Andrew Atherstone to say, Andrew, can you help us think that through, and to Marcus Walker who said this earlier. We need to work together on this, and that must be the next step of the process.

Could I just remind us of what we are voting on this afternoon. We are voting on have we made some progress? That is all, have we made some progress? I think we have made some progress. The prayers, but not the standalone services, will be implemented. We are moving toward a B 2 process, which I think for those who are most concerned about that, is big progress from where we were in February and, as I say, the pastoral provision woven into these proposals as they move forward, the *Pastoral Guidance* when it comes. If we commit to working together on this I continue to believe we can hold this Church together, and all I do is pledge myself to doing my utmost to make that happen. I apologise in advance for when sometimes I get it wrong, and I look to the spirit of Simon and Esther and others who have spoken. That gives me great hope. Please, please vote for this if you can.

The Chair: Daniel Matovu followed by the Archbishop of Perth

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford): “Why is all this so important?” people ask. Well, it matters to God, as He had made clear through His Word, which, thankfully, is much easier to comprehend than the 108-page document presented to us by the bishops. If you care to look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 you find a list, not of the righteous but of the unrighteous. It includes the sexually immoral, adulterers and *arsenokoitai*. Though I read ancient Greek at Oxford you do not have to be a classics scholar to know the meaning of the term *arsenokoitai*. It is easy to translate. It literally means “male bedders” or, as the LLF materials translate it, “males who bed together”. It is not qualified in any way according to the nature or stability of the relationship, so it covers any male who sleeps with another male. Of such males, God’s word does not say that God will bless their union. It does not say that God will bless the goods or fruits of their relationship provided it is stable, faithful and committed. Nor even that God will make pastoral provision for them without requiring them to repent. No. Nothing of the sort.

What the Word of God does say is that these persons - males who sleep with other males - will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Not my words: God’s word. Now, that is a very big deal. Nobody in this chamber should doubt the seriousness of those consequences. The 44 bishops will correct me if I am wrong, but I thought that the mission of the Church was to encourage people to get into the Kingdom of Heaven, not help them get disqualified from it. I believe that the bishops’ proposals are contrary to and wholly inconsistent with God’s Word. I am shocked at the lack of transparency, lack of integrity, lack of proper process in accordance with the Canons. For these reasons, I cannot support this motion.

The Chair: The Archbishop of Perth first, followed by the Archbishop of Central Africa

Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy (The Anglican Church of Australia): Kay Goldsworthy, no number, Anglican Communion observer from the Province of Australia, the Diocese of Perth, and I live on the lands of Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation. I am the Australian episcopal representative on the Anglican Consultative Council, a member of

the Lambeth Phase 3 Working Group, and I drew this straw to be the Lead on Human Dignity Call.

I am chairing the newly formed Anglican Communion Schools Network which has decided on Anglican identity as the first focus of our work together. Australians have over many years contributed to, and continue to contribute to, the life of the Communion, clergy and lay people with particular skills given for the life of the Church in the world beyond their own. Over years, the work of networks, ecumenical councils, doctrine and theological education and inter-faith work are just a few of the areas in which Australian Anglicans have contributed to and learned from the whole Communion. We punch above our weight, and many, many Australian Anglicans value being part of the Anglican Communion.

Across our Church, the Five Marks of Mission are front and centre in our dioceses, our agencies, our schools and our parishes. They are a common thread in our mission and ministry. It is a great grief to me that, since 1994, one diocese in our province stopped its contributions to the special fund from which we contribute to the Communion. Since then, that diocese has funded partners and ministry of its own choosing around the world. Some of the business of your agenda is very familiar. Following a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse in institutions, we are all too familiar with working through how to honour survivors, matters of redress, civil litigation, safe church requirements and climate change is writ large for us.

Thank you, members of Synod, for your welcome in these days. There are, I know, a number of people from my diocese and beyond following the debates closely. Some will be commentating with grief and anger, and others holding on to the hope that their relationships will have the opportunity to come further into the light and grace of the Church. We inhabit the whole wide, and ever widening, spectrum of theological, biblical and liturgical breadth.

In the Communion, the differences between us have resulted in some making the choice to step away from being at the table of Eucharist with each other. How damaging this is. We are a broken body which needs the broken body of Christ in order that we might grow into His fullness of love. There was a remarkable and holy moment at Lambeth last year when, during the Call on Human Dignity, a statement made by the Archbishop of Canterbury made clear the gift and grace of Communion present in that large and disparate body, one instrument speaking to another helped moved the whole Church on.

My plea from another part of the Communion for you, as you attend to your business, is that, as you have said a lot about marriage, about all that is good and holy and strong within it, and that as someone who was allowed to marry 30 something years ago, I hope that you will choose to stick, to be faithful, to hold on whatever decision you make today and please do it not only for yourself but for the rest of us in the Communion.

The Archbishop of Central Africa (The Most Revd Albert Chama): I am Archbishop Albert Chama from the Church of the Province of Central Africa and at the same time I am the Chairperson of CAPA. That is an organisation that holds our 15 provinces on the continent of Africa. I, first of all, appreciate the Synod for inviting our province to send me to come and be part of this august Synod as you debate on various issues.

But I would like just to say one thing, Synod, to you all. As you think, and as you get ready to vote on the matter at hand, I would really, first of all, take you slightly backwards to say to you that we are referred to as offsprings of the Church of England, and we do not deny that. Coupled with that, all of us have enjoyed the big family of the Anglican Communion.

Thirdly, we have always been carrying each other. The fruits of being in the bigger family of the Anglican Communion is a blessing as the Communion is a gift to us all. We have been enjoying just to be part of that huge family which has cut across culture, languages, you name it, because of the salvation that we all receive in the person of Jesus Christ. But because of some of the happenings, like the issues at hand that you are debating, it has caused some hurt, some pain and some discomfort in some members of the family.

These strains have come at a cost because we are seeing the family crumbling in our faces, no longer talking to each other, no longer fellowshiping with one another and no longer just being there as we used to be. Well, I have taken into cognisance the fact that the issue you are debating is on same-sex relationships. We love our brothers and sisters. I personally have got friends in such relationships. We get along. We talk. We laugh. We walk together. But, for the sake of the wider family, as somebody said, let us not rush to vote for the change we have been discussing.

Let us be patient and work together in our loving relationships as a family of the Anglican Communion. I take a leaf from the General Synod of our province. It has taken us almost 25 years debating on the ordination of women. Yes, it has not been easy. It has been tough for me as the Primate of Central Africa but, because of the patience, the engagement, at the last Synod we saw the mind of God prevailing quietly, justly, in each one of us who are delegates.

We say to you, for the sake of the Anglican Communion, consider us, we are your family, we are part of you. We need you as you need us, and that is the joy of Christ. Let us walk together, as you think before you come to the voting that there is somebody there who cares for you as you care for them.

The Revd Canon Alison Kemp (Bristol): This is my first speech at Synod. On my 16th birthday, I went to a mission service in Worcester Cathedral. The service was based on Isaiah 43 and the words “fear not for I have redeemed you” transformed my life that day. I have been frightened of most things most of my life, and those words of not having to be fearing anymore turned my life around. Many, many years later, I was to come to understand that that fear largely came from being autistic. At the time, the fear did not

magically disappear, but it gave me a way to live through my life through that redemption of God. We have heard a lot about fear these last few days, and one of the fears expressed this morning particularly concerned me.

It was the Bishop who said, "We must not pass this motion as we would risk our exemption from the Equality Act". As disabled people, the Equality Act is what protects us. It gives us life. It enables us to live. I am not convinced that it actually would cause us to lose the exemption if we passed this motion. As a Church founded on the love of God, is this who we really want to be: a Church that wants to be exempt from the Equality Act, that wants to do things that keep us from being part of everybody? Sorry, that made no sense. It is reminiscent of a Home Secretary saying that she wanted us to be exempt from the European Court of Human Rights recently.

I know many of us are frightened and concerned of what might or might not be after today. We are all struggling to discern what God's will is, but Jesus reached out in love not judgment to those on the margins and those who were excluded. For me, that is the model that I want to follow. Synod, do we want to be a Church which is truly inclusive, with places of belonging for all or, rather, one that chooses to hide behind exemptions? Please vote in favour of the motion.

The Revd Adrian Clarke (London): Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to make my maiden speech. Four years ago, I was charged by the Bishops of Edmonton and London to start an ethnically diverse church in Colindale and, by God's grace, we have done it. We now have a growing church that has over 95% of the congregation counting their heritage as coming from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Southern Asia and Eastern Asia.

I have spoken to other leaders of churches in the Anglican Church with a strong global majority presence, and I want to speak on behalf of my congregants and their congregants. They believe that Scripture stands alone in being the primary measuring stick of our lives. They believe that the Books of both the Old Testament and New Testament that are not poetic or prophetic in nature need to be interpreted in context literally, not by influence of culture nor by popular demand or personal opinion. They believe that Jesus did not refute the laws around sexuality. In fact, they would argue that in Matthew 5 he said he came to uphold the law. They believe that Jesus did not change the balance of Scripture on sexual immorality. Instead, in Matthew 19, He has solely upheld that Godly sexual relationships to be between one man and one woman.

A good number of my congregation have put their family lives on the line in Pakistan, Africa and China, and many more would be willing to do so and to defend the Scriptures, and to defend them that they are the very Word of God and in their eyes any watering down of this Gospel is to count as null and void. In their eyes, therefore, they propose these proposed blessings are blessings of sexual immorality, compromising doctrine and, consequently, are saying to me that if these *Prayers* are passed, my congregants are saying that either we leave the Church of England or they will leave this church. This has

been a very hard position for me to find myself in. I am somebody who loves the Anglican Church and was delighted to be part of it.

Friends, the vote we are facing today will change the course of history in the Church of England. I implore you, please, please, please, if you have any hint of doubt of what the Word says about these *Prayers*, then please join me in the safe harbour of interpreting Scripture literally by voting against this motion.

The Revd Arwen Folkes (Chichester): Thank you for allowing me to speak, and to those who have made my participation on Zoom possible over these three days. Attending Synod on Zoom has been a rather interesting experience. Away from the heat and the multiple conversations over tea, I have been so grateful for the head space, all bar my two snoring dogs, to really be able to listen. I have been deeply moved by the huge amount of common ground we all share, our love for Christ and His Church, our deep and convicted faith and our hope for human flourishing however differently we understand these things.

I have heard the Holy Scriptures being used in all sorts of different ways, often atomised, sometimes weaponised, occasionally healing. Hearing St Augustine referenced a couple of times reminded me of his counsel in Book III.14 of *De Doctrina Christiana*, the first ever manual of hermeneutics and homiletics for clergy. We find in there that he writes that, if there is ever more than one meaning in Scripture, you must choose the one that very best leads you to love of God and love of neighbour.

As I have held us all in prayer, I have given special attention to the conversations around First Order matters, credal and doctrinal rules and the assertion of rigidity that is apparently insisted upon by Jesus and the Church. But also on my heart is that story written in each of the three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 12, Mark 3 and Luke 6, of the healing of the man on the Sabbath. Here, we see Jesus blatantly bending another rule, which interestingly also finds its origin in Genesis, breaking it in pursuit of mercy, to heal, to restore and to bless. Synod, I want to urge us all to hold this story in mind as we each consider whether or not to support this motion.

I want us to hold that story of Christ's rule-bending ministry alongside the stories we have heard of pain and life-risking hurt that the rules have caused. I would like us to think of Christ breaking those religious rules in order to heal, and of Augustine calling us to choose the interpretation of Scripture that best leads us towards fulfilling that vital and greatest commandment of love of God and love of neighbour. Please allow us as a Church, even if only part of the Church, to gradually begin, through the example of Christ, to heal and love those who have been hurting for far too long. Please support this motion.

Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely): This is my maiden speech. I have not yet met all of you within Synod, but I have met many from all sides of the debate, and I have valued our conversations and I am grateful for the kindness and patience I have met. I am a scientist by background, and I am a churchwarden of a small rural church of around 16 people

which is part of a 15 church benefice. I love our church members in all their diversity, and I love my LGBT sisters and brothers, and I long for the best for them all. Should we approve this motion before us? Can we really in good conscience do so?

There are so many unhelpful changes that have been slipped into this process. We need to follow good synodical process. The proper route for controversial issues is B 2, according to our Canons, and yet we are being asked to approve a major change of doctrine under Canon B 5, a change that avoids the safeguards of B 2. The legal advice we were given in February has changed, but we are without sight of the new legal advice. We are without the full set of *Prayers*, *Pastoral Guidance* and *Pastoral Reassurance* that we were told needed to be read together. Suddenly, the advice about this has changed. The *Pastoral Reassurance* process provided for churches will drive a wrecking ball through our parishes. Is this the change we want?

We have been provided with theological guidance that, whilst seeking to provide a loving response to our LGBT sisters and brothers, does so in a way that changes the doctrine of marriage. The pastoral provision ignores the warnings of God's Word in the Bible that sex outside the marriage of a man and a woman is sin, both heterosexual and homosexual sex. Nor does it recognise the serious eternal consequences the Bible says of sexual immorality. In Ephesians, we are told that we should follow God's example as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But, among you, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity or greed because these are improper for God's holy people. This applies to all us, brothers and sisters, same-sex or opposite sex attracted. May God help us all. It is well-known among people who train pilots that young pilots flying through a cloud will often emerge upside down. It is because they trust their own instincts over their instrumentation. They believe that they are continuing to keep the plane flying level, making adjustments where they think they are needed but, in fact, all their repeated adjustments, small as they may individually appear, when taken together are enough to turn the plane upside down and to put it in danger.

This is what GS 2328 and the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* have done, and that this motion does. It has turned the words of Jesus upside down by not keeping our eyes on God's word. These are major changes. They are taking us off course. Please reject this motion.

Dr Rachel Jepson (Birmingham): It is important, I feel, in this debate and ongoing post General Synod conversations, for each of us to try hard to locate ourselves a little and to resist the temptation to speak from an imagined, illusionary, abstract, objective or universal place. I come to this as a straight member of the laity with the structural privileges and experiential ignorances which accompany that location.

I come also as someone who is exploring and continuing to work out how to be a faithful disciple of Jesus in giving and receiving love. In this moment, on this long journey together, including from what we have heard already in this debate, it has particularly struck me that there is a need to dig down into the ongoing conversation, to try to discern what is going on in the depths, in the roots of the issues, the disagreements and the wrestling.

It appears that so much of the current conversation is not, at its roots, about sex or marriage or how we read Scripture. Actually, it is about ecclesiology, our understandings of what it means to be Church. It is about what we do with deep difference. It is about how we acknowledge power and vulnerability and how we use power and respond to vulnerability. That requires us to be willing and able to recognise that, especially when the conversation polarises, as it so often does, into sides.

These sides are not symmetrical. Power and vulnerability are unevenly distributed. That has been so evident for many of our LGBT+ siblings in this chamber who have bravely shared of their personal narratives and life experiences. It is also, at root, about who we are prepared to recognise as fellow members of the body of Christ. That is why this is fundamentally a question of ecclesiology. Therefore, let us wholeheartedly vote in favour of the amending motion.

The Bishop of Rochester (The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs): Sisters and brothers, I am deeply grateful for all the work that has gone into this process bringing us to today, and especially enormously grateful for the honesty and vulnerability of those who have spoken during these last 24 hours. But, at the end of the day, it is clear that there remains deep division in this Synod over these issues. Synod, it seems to me that decisions on such contentious issues by simple majority, sometimes very narrow, feels more like an exercise of power - to echo in some ways Rachel's words - than what St Paul commends in Philippians 2 that we should in humility consider others better than ourselves.

We were promised a three-legged stool: prayers, guidance and assurance. Only one has so far been in any complete form provided. Many, sadly, feel that there has been a lack of transparency in the process and that has led to a lack of trust amongst us. I am deeply saddened by that. Synod, provision does not have to be about division. It can be about inclusion. With deep regret and deep sadness, I am going to be voting against this motion. Synod, I believe we can do better and I believe we should do better.

The Revd Canon Dr Rachel Mann (Manchester): Thank you for calling me from my sick bed. "I fear", to misquote the playwright, John Ford, "she looks not like the ruins of her youth but like the ruins of those ruins". I want to remind us that we are all symptoms of a truth that is fairly rarely foregrounded. We are not the Church of England of yesteryear, or of the 80s or 90s, or even pre-pandemic. We are not the Church of the Restoration Settlement. Yes, we carry the traces of the Church of yesterday and her historic formularies and that great deposit of faith is embedded in our polity. But to find a new

inflection in the story of God's faithfulness is not deviant or heretical but to read what is there with fresh and generous eyes.

We have found new ways to dwell together in complexity. Time and again, others have mentioned divorce and shifts in our understanding over who might minister at the Lord's table. I remind us that trans people have had access to Holy Matrimony since 2004 in their transitioned identities. The Church and the world, it has not imploded, we simply allowed a conscience clause. Settlements have been found without schism and definitive division, and the path before us is an invitation along that way. The question is how do we respond to that, as gift or problem? I commit to gift, and I invite you to commit to gift by voting for this motion duly amended, because gift is always the position of God and what He offers to us is gift in season and out of season.

How are we to dwell in this gift of complexity? Well, dwelling is a good word. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us". "Dwelling" is an ancient word in English. "Dwellan" is an old English word which means both to inhabit and to move, to travel and to stray gently and faithfully from the known places as the Church always has. This is the work of the Spirit. This is surely the way of Christ, who is the way. When we pay attention to the wanderings of the people of God in search of the promised land, we discover that we should not be afraid of dwelling in the company of God, who offers us home but leads us to new places over time, that we may receive what He is showing to us.

Friends, I urge you, please, please vote for this motion amended. It is a modest proposal. It is part of our synodality, our walking together in the way of Christ.

Mrs Clare Williams (Norwich): There has been a lot of talk about some people who wish for so much more and the fact that, for some, this is far too much already. The motion before us does simply that: for some not enough and for others it goes too far too quickly without assurances. There has also been talk of unity, and this motion will almost guarantee further division. For those of you who are in the middle ground of this debate, please consider those at the edges and unity of the body of Christ, which today is in grave danger. I cannot support this motion and I urge you to resist it.

I want to talk specifically about the standalone services which now form a large part of this motion, and about the grace of the sacraments. While I recognise that there are some here who do not view marriage as a sacrament, there are others among us for whom that holds great importance. But I believe there are important concerns here for us all. As those young people I have prepared for Confirmation will tell you, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In relation to the standalone services, particularly point 7 on symbolism, we are in danger of losing sight of two very important things which may speak to people who are of differing opinions in the debate today.

First, I fear that, while it is made clear in the *Pastoral Guidance* that the *Prayers of Love and Faith* should not attempt to resemble Holy Matrimony, this would in part be what we

are doing in the optics of what is being suggested both on page 15 of the *Pastoral Guidance* and on point 7, page 4 of Annex D where, although rings are not exchanged, they can be worn and prayed for. It seems that in a half-hearted attempt to offer something, what has already been referred to as crumbs, we are offering an empty outward and visible sign and withholding the grace of the sacraments. For those who have campaigned so hard for so long on one hand, surely this is not enough.

On the other hand, we would also be undermining the sacramental ministry of God's Church by being keen to appear to offer what looks like a sacrament, to seem generous, but also makes a mockery of their serious nature, and is inconsistent with the calls for transparency. There are those among us who hugely value the sacramental ministry of the Church and for whom this motion causes significant problems.

This motion lacks transparency but also certainty. People on both sides of the debate and those in the centre must resist this uncertain direction of travel. I urge you to resist this motion, which risks a hollow offer of an empty outward sign to our LGBTQ+ sisters and brothers and, fundamentally, fails to take seriously the grace of the sacraments and how many of us would wish them to be represented and exercised.

Mrs Julie Dziegel (Oxford): I am in favour of this motion but I would like to speak to something that may be a little bit of a niche point. I am a deanery treasurer, and in the Diocese of Oxford this means that I and my 28 peers are responsible for allocating Parish Share to the parish in our deaneries and then using our powers of persuasion to get that Share paid. This is not an easy job at the best of times. I am quite used to grace exiting stage right as soon as Parish Share is mentioned but, frankly, I have had a torrid time this year.

Dioceses need to receive Parish Share and common fund contributions in order to pay and house the clergy, but also to provide services that they are required to provide. They need to provide those services to all parishes regardless of the theology practised in those parishes, and at the point that any parish needs them, which will vary each year. In payments of Parish Share, there is inevitably an element of mutual support. I guess it varies depending on how you structure your Parish Share system, but it is always there. At the moment, we have a situation where some parishes are unwilling to fund other parishes due to theological differences. Sadly, I cannot see this situation getting any better, and it will probably get worse.

This is my plea. Can we pass this motion and commend our progress but, as part of further work, can we also look in these alternative structures that we must consider not only for pastoral provision but also financial structures that suit not only the parishes that have these issues, but also the dioceses that do need to receive this money to provide the services. Something agreed could work all round. I doubt it will make the average year in the life of a deanery treasurer much better, but it might stop it becoming a whole lot worse. Please do vote for the motion.

Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol): A brother in Christ, a new friend of mine, wondered in GS 2328 what the crumbs were for him as a gay priest wanting to get married. Synod's support for the Bishop of Oxford's amendment hopefully has increased the number of crumbs for him, though I still guess that they will feel like very meagre crumbs for him. Where are the crumbs of comfort for me, as a gay man, watching the Church seeing me abandon teaching and discipline I have found so life-giving and affirming?

I have yet to find a crumb of comfort in these proposals. Back in February, my crumbs of comfort were reassuring words from the Archbishop of York pledging that I will not be able to support commending these *Prayers* until we have the *Pastoral Guidance* and pastoral provision. I took those crumbs of comfort home. I appreciated them. They have kept me going. I perhaps naively fed them to others too. This time, I am walking away, perhaps forever, with no crumbs of comfort at all. Yes, the House of Bishops talk of a new formal structural pastoral provision but, until there is real action, real conversations, particularly conversations involving the bishops themselves who seem to be the block to this conversation, there are no crumbs of comfort for me and many, many people like me in this Church today. As a result, I cannot support this crumbless motion. If you want people like me to be comforted, please reject it too.

The Chair: Now I wish to test the mind of Synod as to whether Item 7, the main motion as amended, has been sufficiently debated. I will, therefore, put a motion for closure on Item 7 as amended.

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

The Chair: The motion for closure is carried and so I call upon the Bishop of London to respond to the debate. She has up to five minutes.

The Bishop of London (The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE): Thank you, Synod, for your contributions. I know that they have been painful for some, and I cannot do justice to them, but be assured they have been recorded and we will be reflecting upon them. I am grateful that I have heard new voices, and those of the laity, and the experiences that they have had. I want, again, to recognise the hurt across the breadth of belief. We have heard the concern about openness and transparency and the House of Bishops' Standing Committee will reflect on these comments.

As I have already said, since February, the House has met three times, the College of Bishops at least three and the *Living in Love and Faith* Steering Group over 14 times. At all of these meetings, there have been legal contributions and the legal has been in conversation with theology. This has been an iterative process, as has the development of the *Pastoral Guidance*. Theology, legal advice and pastoral consideration have been in constant conversation in order to have an integrated approach. Those who have advised on all these aspects of *Living in Love and Faith*, including legal matters, have contributed to GS 2328 and are satisfied that the advice is accurately reflected within.

There is no single document that we are able to give you. If there were, it would be misleading, because it would capture one moment in the last eight months. *Living in Love and Faith* seeks to explore issues of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. A key emphasis has been on encountering one another in these conversations, seeking understanding of one another, of our faith tradition in the spirit of openness and deep mutual respect.

Encountering the other, if it is to be an encounter which honours the God who made us and loves us all, will always be a two-way exchange. It is not an academic learning experience where we are to gather information about something or somebody so that we can be better informed. It is a relationship. In relationship, our boundaries are permeable. We let the other in. This is hard work and requires courage, but to hold the other at arm's length is not really to encounter them as a person at all but to observe them as an object.

Our challenge as a Synod is, in understanding that we do not agree, to ask ourselves how do we live as children of God made in His image in the midst of disagreement, resisting polarisation which seems to be increasing in the world and the Church? In June 2003, Rowan Williams in his General Synod address spoke about a reality where everyone believes that they are a persecuted minority. He went on to say that this is not a situation that encourages easy and honest communication. It is a situation that cries out for scapegoats. Sexuality has become weaponised, and it has become so easy for us to enter into the culture wars of our times, for we live in a time of scapegoating. I often speak at secular events and offer them a Christian alternative, that of seeing one another made in the image of God.

The motion agreed in February 2023 was a result of listening to God, to Scripture and to one another. It was about finding that place where we can continue to live together focusing on the mission of the Church. For many, what is being proposed does not go far enough. For others, it goes too far. None of us underestimate the deeply divisive nature of our disagreement, but this is not a credal issue. Unity, however, is. We have sought to thread reassurance through the proposals. For some, this will not be enough and, therefore, the House of Bishops has committed to look at formal structural provision.

For some, the simple fact that I have led this process has meant that they see me no longer in communion with them. I want to assure them that I still believe that we are in communion with one another and, whilst I may no longer be invited to eat at their table, they will always be welcome at mine. If that means that I need to sit outside with the powerless, the marginalised and the lost, then that is where I will sit, and I am certain that I will also encounter Christ there. To see the other made in the image of God allows us to see them not as the other, but with equity as God sees them with the love which Jesus Christ sees the other.

Finally, Cole Arthur Riley in her book, *This Here Flesh*, writes, "To be able to marvel at the face of our neighbor with the same awe we have for the mountaintop, the sunlight refracting - this manner of vision is what will keep us from destroying each other". Let us

choose not to destroy one another but truly to encounter one another, to dare to see God's image in each other, to embrace each other without judgment, to rejoice in the gift of one another's different understanding, to be one body, however messy, and by doing this know that God is in this place. I ask Synod to vote for this amended motion.

The Revd Timothy Edwards (Rochester): I wonder if we might have a vote by Houses and I wonder, with your discretion, if we might have a brief moment of silent prayer before we vote.

The Chair: I have already said to myself and, indeed, communicated it to the Archbishop, that I think we should have a moment of silent prayer which will be concluded by the Archbishop praying. I hope the message had got to you. It does not sound as if it had. We will have a moment of silent prayer, and then I will consider the substance of what you have to say.

(Prayer)

The Chair: In answer to the point of order, do I see 25 members standing? Yes, I do see 25 members standing, therefore there will be a division by Houses and I direct that the bell will be rung.

Mr Andrew Cornes (Chichester): Point of order. Would it be possible for us to have the amended wording up on the screen? That would certainly help me to know how to vote.

The Chair: It is probably not possible to have it on the screen, but it is on the Synod App. I am sure we could do this in our heads, could we not, Mr Cornes? The motion at 7 that has been amended by two items, 31 and 38. If you cannot find it on the app somebody, I am sure, will willingly show it to you because they are probably more technologically literate than either you or I, but there we are.

The vote on Item 7 (as amended): In the House of Bishops, those in favour 23, against 10, with 4 recorded abstentions. In the House of Clergy, 100 in favour, 93 against, with 1 recorded abstention. And in the House of Laity, 104 in favour, 100 against, with no recorded abstentions.

The motion was put and carried.

The Chair: That concludes this item of business. The next business I think is on the Order Paper at 502.

THE CHAIR *Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford)* took the Chair at 4.03 pm

SPECIAL AGENDA I LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS ITEM 502

VACANCY IN SEE COMMITTEES (AMENDMENT) REGULATION (GS 2329)

The Chair: Hello, General Synod, follow that! And, in particular, for one's maiden session as Chair. I have, before I begin, a point of order from the Archbishop of Canterbury which I have agreed to.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): Thank you, Chair, for agreeing a point of order which is a non-point of order, but just on behalf of the Synod, I would like to thank Geoffrey for the most... Thank you, and please could the record show that before the thanks could be uttered, the Synod greeted him with a standing ovation. Thank you so much.

The Chair: We come to Item 502, the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2023. Members will need the Regulation, GS 2329, and the Explanatory Memorandum, GS 2329X. I invite the Revd Paul Benfield to move Item 502. He has up to 10 minutes.

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I have never been to the Channel Islands, and so I am well-qualified to move this motion. I am hoping that perhaps after it I will get an invitation to visit. You may remember that, in 2018, the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed a Commission to inquire into the relationship of the Channel Islands with the wider Church of England after difficulties had arisen between the Bishop of Winchester and the islands. That Commission reported in 2019, and recommended the transfer of the Channel Islands to the Diocese of Salisbury.

The Channel Islands Measure 2020 was passed to enable that to happen, and the islands were transferred to the Diocese of Salisbury by Orders in Council later that year. The Commission also recommended that the respective roles of bishop and the two island deans of Jersey and Guernsey, and between the diocese and the two island deaneries, be clarified by means of a memorandum of understanding. The Report said that this would need to be worked out in detail between the respective diocesan bishop and the two deans and the deanery standing committee.

That memorandum was signed by the then Bishop of Salisbury, Bishop Holtam, and the two deans in December 2020. It stated that the two deans should be *ex officio* members of the Vacancy in See Committee for the Diocese of Salisbury. Paragraph 2 of the draft Regulations makes the Dean of Jersey and the Dean of Guernsey *ex officio* members of the Diocese of Salisbury Vacancy in See Committee. I beg to move that the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2023 be approved.

The Chair: The item is now open for debate. There will initially be a five minute speaking restriction.

The Ven. Alan Jeans (Salisbury): I was hoping that, as in *The Two Ronnies*, my colleague would have gone first, but here I am. I stand to speak in favour of this motion, which is a necessary step in the growing partnership of in ministry and mission between the bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey and the Diocese of Salisbury. It is exactly 12 months to the day since the final Order in Council was approved, and Guernsey became attached to the diocese following Jersey's transfer a few weeks before.

I am delighted to report that our relationship is flourishing. We have been dating for just a short period of time, and we have noticed some preferences together with some differences. There are significant differences between the two bailiwicks, let alone between the bailiwicks and the diocese. For example, the islands have their own Canons and, for example, I understand that the imperial measure of length for a foot differs between the two islands and the mainland. However, as Fr Benfield has said, we drafted a memorandum of understanding not unlike a prenuptial agreement.

We noted in the MOU that, in due course, when we needed a new bishop - and thank you to the CNC for gifting us Bishop Stephen Lake, he will do for now - it would be right and proper for the two Deans of Guernsey and Jersey to be *ex officio* members of the diocesan Vacancy in See Committee. Lay representatives from the islands to this Committee are already catered for in the current Regulations. I thank the Legal Office for their support and assistance with our ambitions to give our new decanal colleagues a voice in the Vacancy in See Committee.

Approving the amended Regulation will confirm our commitment to work together as we look to a future of mutual respect, a shared vision and strategy, and a desire to support our mutual flourishing in our respective contexts. As an archdeacon in England, I can see that there is no sense of a big brother or rivalled siblings, but a sacred living and learning together. We are thankful to our sisters and brothers in Christ in the islands for their love and partnership in the Gospel. Members of Synod, share in our joy as we celebrate our living with difference, and please vote for this simple amendment to our Vacancy in See Committee in our desire to work even closer together.

The Very Revd Mike Keirle (Channel Islands): Attached to the Diocese of Salisbury. May I begin by saying that, Paul, your invitation to the Channel Islands may very well depend on the outcome of this vote and, for clarification and for posterity, I need to tell you that a Jersey foot is 11 inches. "Attached to the Diocese of Salisbury". You will have no idea how important those six words have been for the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey.

In recent times, we have weathered a significant storm. I am not referring to Storm Ciarán, where in Jersey winds reached 190 miles an hour with hailstones the size of tennis balls cutting a swathe of destruction through the island for five miles, but it felt like that at times. I am referring to the eight years whereby the bailiwicks found themselves without a proper spiritual home following our departure from Winchester. Island life, inevitably, is somewhat insular in nature, but during those eight years we were very much turned inwards as we wrestled with what had happened and began to ask the question

what does it mean for us to belong to the wider Church? As we have heard in the introduction, the Archbishops' Commission in 2019 determined that we should belong to the Diocese of Salisbury, but I would like to put on record here our thanks to the Diocese of Canterbury for the safe harbour they gave us during those difficult years.

The memorandum of understanding was, indeed, drawn up between bishop and dean and island and diocese, and this amendment is the final piece of the puzzle that gives legal substance to our belonging and cements our new relationship. But, as we have heard from my dear colleague, it comes more than a year after our formal attachment to the Diocese of Salisbury. I ask you to approve this amendment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the legal team for their attention to this matter and to Bishop Stephen Lake and the diocese for their extraordinary welcome that has enabled us to be enriched, and to flourish, and to sweep away the old anxieties and, most importantly, to look outwards and to get on with the important task, and the joyful task, of making Jesus known.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London): I am slightly concerned whether this produces a slightly top heavy Vacancy in See Committee with more clerics than lay members, and I would be grateful if maybe the mover of the motion might respond to that in his closing remarks and, if it does, maybe something could be done about that in due course.

The Revd Mike Tufnell (Salisbury): I echo Debbie's concerns, actually. I saw information from my diocese about some of the details of this last week. I have no qualms whatsoever with the Channel Islands' voices being properly represented which they, of course, should be. My question actually was around whether it was democratically entirely fair that the electoral roll of the whole diocese in relation to the Channel Islands was still being reasonably and fairly represented, as well as the laity question that has just been raised by my colleague, Debbie Buggs.

I wanted to form this, actually, into a friendly amendment, and told my archdeacon as such at the weekend. I was told I was going to be sent information to help me make that friendly amendment but it was not forthcoming. I just have a slight concern about this. I do not think I am going to be able to change the vote at all. I just would have loved to have put in a friendly amendment. I have concerns about it being properly democratic with respect to the rest of the diocese, of which I am a part, and so I thought I felt obliged to say that.

The Chair imposed a speech limit of three minutes.

Mrs Debbie Mclsaac (Salisbury): My understanding is that the lay representation on the Vacancy in See Committee and a lay representative from Jersey were sorted out internally within the diocese some six months ago.

The Bishop of Durham (The Rt Revd Paul Butler): For five years, I served as the Bishop of Southampton when the Channel Islands were part of the Diocese of Winchester. I loved visiting both islands, and I got on very well with Mike Keirle, who was then an incumbent and now is the dean. I simply want to put on record as someone who took part in that, who then saw with sadness all that happened, and now greets with great joy the way that this has been resolved and thank all those who have worked incredibly hard, including the previous Bishop of Dover who looked after them for a long while, and to the folk of Salisbury and of the islands for now working to a really happy conclusion. Congratulations, well done.

The Chair: I see no one else wanting to speak either in the room or on Zoom and, in the circumstances, I call upon Paul Benfield to reply.

The Revd Paul Benfield (Blackburn): I will not go through all the contributions individually. To address the question about the laity, the Regulations provide that, as far as possible, the number of lay and clergy representatives on a Vacancy in See Committee should be equal. There was some discussion, I understand, between the Legal Office and people in the Diocese of Salisbury about the position of laity from the Channel Islands.

It is the view of the Legal Office that they are already covered in the Regulations as they stand, but if there is any ambiguity, it is proposed next year to bring a consolidation of all these Regulations together and that point will be addressed to make it absolutely clear that a lay person from the Bailiwick of Guernsey and a lay person from the Bailiwick of Jersey will be entitled to be on the Vacancy in See Committee. As for the representation between the Channel Islands and the rest of the diocese, I am afraid I cannot comment, but that would be something that the Committee would need to consider as it carried out its work.

Thank you for the earlier contributions from the Archdeacon of Sarum. Yes, indeed, there are many differences, not least legal differences - the two islands operate under different legal systems. In a sad evening, some years ago, I was sent an article from the *Channel Islands Law Review*, something I do not normally read, explaining the history of the Church in the Channel Islands.

But the point of all this is, as has been said, to allow the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be proclaimed well, efficiently and pastorally in those islands, and I hope that this will be the conclusion of the change that has taken place over many years. I urge you to support this motion standing in my name.

The Chair: I now put Item 502 to the vote.

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

The Chair: That is clearly carried. That completes this item of business.

THE CHAIR *The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby)* took the Chair at 4.21 pm

ITEM 8 PROROGATION

The Ven. Luke Miller (London): Point of order. Recognising that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, would it be in order before the prorogation of this Synod to thank Canon Simon Butler for his service as Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury and for all else that he has done in the service of this Synod.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr Justin Welby): Technically, no. But, taking the words from St Augustine recently that anything that contributes to love of God and love of neighbour is in order - I am slightly retranslating - yes. Okay, here we go again. If anyone wants a vote on this by Houses, tough luck!

The Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the Synod and dismissed it with a blessing.

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARIES TO QUESTIONS

Question 5 to the Chair of the House of Bishops

Ms Fiona McMillan (London): Thank you, Bishop Sarah, for your answer. Did the Synod vote in 2002 which allowed remarriage following divorce require a change in the doctrine of marriage?

Answer

In July 2002, the General Synod considered a report from the House of Bishops *Marriage in Church after Divorce* (GS 1449). That report stated (paragraph 1):

“While the Church has always upheld the permanence of marriage, it is also evident that since New Testament times the Church has struggled to come to terms with divorce. The Church of England has sought both to uphold the principle of life-long marriage and to provide a pastoral ministry to divorced persons who seek a further marriage in church. The latest proposals are an honest attempt to do just that.”

In the light of that report, the Synod resolved:

“That this Synod—

- a) Affirm in accordance with the doctrine of the Church of England as set out in Canon B 30, that marriage should always be undertaken as a ‘solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman’;
- b) Recognize -
 - i) That some marriages regrettably do fail and that the Church's care for couples in that situation should be of paramount importance; and
 - ii) That there are exceptional circumstances in which a divorced person may be married in church during the lifetime of a former spouse;
- c) Recognize that the decision as to whether or not to solemnise such a marriage in church after divorce rests with the minister (or officiating cleric if the minister is prepared to allow his/her church or chapel to be used for the marriage) and;
- d) Invite the House of Bishops to issue the advice contained in Annex 1 of GS1449.”

The General Synod also rescinded certain resolutions of the Convocations passed in 1938 and 1957 which had described marriage as “indissoluble save by death”.

Question 24 to the Chair of the House of Bishops

The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn): To the best of your knowledge has the House of Clergy and General Synod ever before been asked to vote on a motion that involves

placing fellow priests in a position of considerable legal uncertainty without being party to the legal advice on which the House of Bishops has acted?

Answer

The House did not consider the position to be one of considerable legal uncertainty. The legal basis on which the House of Bishops acted, and which takes full account of the legal advice it received, is set out in Annex 1 to GS 2328 at paragraphs 3 to 26.

Question 53 to the Chair of the House of Bishops

The Revd Mae Christie (London): Just one question. Could the House of Bishops, or you perhaps on their behalf, provide a definition of a standalone service?

Answer

By “standalone” services, we mean services that are not part of the ordinary pattern of worship for a parish involving the regular services that are required by canon, but are for a special occasion where the focus of the service is that occasion.

Question 70 to the Chair of the House of Bishops

The Revd Paul Bradbury (Salisbury): Given the importance and the scale and the complexity and the urgency around the drafting of the Pastoral Guidance, can I ask what level of resource, perhaps in terms of full-time equivalent posts, has been dedicated to drafting it?

Answer

The preparation of the Pastoral Guidance has involved a number of staff in different departments, all of whom have varied portfolios not simply focused on LLF. The lead member of staff has been the Secretary for Theology and Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops, alongside their other responsibilities both on other aspects of LLF and wider responsibilities. Administrative support was given by the Theology Officer. But the work of the Guidance has drawn in the legal office, the national liturgical adviser, staff from the ministry development team and from the education team (though this list is not exhaustive). The work of putting the Guidance together has been highly collaborative and involved consultation with multiple staff and departments as well as many external advisers and stakeholders.

Question 88 to the Chair of the House of Bishops

Ms Rebecca Mynett (St Albans): In the light of that answer and given that we established earlier in answer to a supplementary on question 61 that secular civil marriage and canonical church marriage are different things, is it the case that liturgical affirmation of a secular civil marriage cannot contravene Canon B 30 on Holy Matrimony as Canon B 30 only relates to canonical church marriage?

Answer

The House has focused on the PLF (which are not a liturgical affirmation of a civil marriage) and has not reached a view on wider questions as to the relationship between civil same sex marriage and marriage as it is understood by the Church.

Question 113 to the Church Commissioners

Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury): As per the question, please would it be possible to provide a further written answer as to the relative historical size of parochial or benefice endowments?

Answer

When the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976 came into effect Commissioners' funds managed for the benefit of specific benefices were transferred into the Commissioners' General Fund. This was reported in the Commissioners' 1978/79 annual report and financial statements which included a line for capital transferred under Endowment and Glebe Measure. The funds so transferred represented 19% of the funds managed by the Commissioners on behalf of the Church as at 31 March 1978.

At the same time the Commissioners began paying fixed sums (Guaranteed Annuities and other special payments) towards the stipend costs of most clergy, totalling around £5 million p.a. This represented around 20% of the Commissioners' non-pensions expenditure and 14% of the total expenditure.

Prior to the Endowments and Glebe Measure coming into effect the Commissioners managed certain funds for the benefit of specific benefices. The Commissioners' 1977 report and accounts described the pooling of benefice endowments as "an important further stage in the century long process by which the historic endowments of the Church of England will be shared more fairly for the benefit of the Church's ministry."

Question 149 to the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool): Thank you, Carl, for your answer about the issue of amalgamation of parishes into a single larger parish and for pointing us to sharing and learning so that we can see what God is blessing or otherwise. Would the Archbishops' Council provide a shortlist of independent reviews, such as was done for Transforming Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool this year, for all programmes that amalgamated parishes since 2013?

Answer

No project since 2013 with a significant element of parish amalgamation has had a final evaluation apart from Transforming Wigan. We are intending to publish the learnings from all future evaluations of SDF, STF and SMMI projects. Projects with a significant element of parish amalgamation are a small minority of projects and programmes funded. A full list of programmes funded by the SIB is available on the Church of England website in [SIB annual reports](#), the [Independent Review](#), and [here](#).

Other research undertaken into parish amalgamations and multi-parish benefices include follow-up reports to the Church Growth Research Programme which have more sophisticated analysis of their impact. *Stronger as One* and *Growing Deeper*, undertaken by Dr Fiona Tweedie, are available on the Church of England website [here](#). The [summary note](#) synthesises the research. “Recent research has confirmed that clergy numbers have a significant effect on the likelihood of attendance growth and decline. This research has also revealed that there is no statistically significant relationship between the number of churches within a benefice (the benefice structure) and numerical growth or decline when the effects of clergy numbers and three other factors namely: the type of geographical area, changes in the population and the starting size of the congregation are taken into consideration.”

Question 150 to the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council

The Revd Matthew Beer (Lichfield): Of the 700 new worshipping communities, how many of them are lay-led or under the extended oversight of a priest or bishop?

Answer

Dioceses are not required to specifically report on whether leaders of new worshipping communities in their projects are lay or ordained, and so this data isn’t available for the 700 number.

The best piece of research we have commissioned on this question is the Church Army Research Unit’s *Day of Small Things* Research in 2016. This identified all the Fresh Expressions in half of Church of England dioceses and asked a number of questions of the leaders of each one. They found a roughly 50:50 split between lay and ordained leadership. It ranged between about 30% lay led to about 70% lay led between dioceses. Accepted practice is that these would be under some level of oversight from an incumbent or bishop. There is no clear reason to expect a similar pattern wouldn’t hold today.

Presently we are encouraging dioceses to be part of a common framework which will include new leaders as one of its measures, enabling this analysis to be done robustly in future. Plus the Ministry Development Team are undertaking a comprehensive review of lay ministry this year.

Question 156 to the Presidents of the Archbishops’ Council

The Revd Aneal Appadoo (Co-opted): Thank you for your answer to my question, I was grateful for the clarity. I would encourage the Council to agree making this public before the next Synod as per your suggestion. However, in the absence of formal policy at present, I would be interested in knowing what guidance is currently given to trustees to assist them in ensuring they are following the Charity Commission requirements and best practice and on identifying and recording perceived or actual conflicts of interests in their current meetings?

Answer

At present trustees are required to declare their interests annually, and at the start of each meeting the Chair will invite members to disclose any new interests of relevance to the agenda so that those can be handled (and where those are disclosed, those will be recorded in the minutes). We are doing further work on the detail, for example on identifying what constitutes interests of relevance (as a simple example, being in ordained ministry gives an interest in a debate on the future of stipends, but given that the law requires certain ordained members of the Council, would it be right to recuse all ordained members from such a vote?). This work is taking a little longer than expected and may take until after the February Synod.

Question 207 to the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee

Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury): Might it be possible to now commission a robust financial plan & cost-benefit analysis?

Answer

In 2022, the General Synod approved a Routemap for the Journey to Net Zero for the Church of England, and the Net Zero Carbon Programme Board are now overseeing this work, to ensure the most cost-effective way to use the £190 million in funding made available by the Church Commissioners to support Synod's decision. The Board has allocated the first £30 million in funding for this Triennium. This forms the development phase of the programme [[Church of England invests GBP 30m in kickstarting net zero plans](#)].

The Net Zero Carbon Programme Team has been focused on understanding where emissions reductions can be most effectively achieved across the various classes of buildings in our care. The Energy Footprint Tool has, for example, demonstrated that the top 20% of churches in terms of emissions make up half of the aggregate carbon footprint for churches. The team has recently completed a survey of over 100 clergy homes and this is informing the development of the decarbonisation strategy for housing. Similar work is underway to prioritise how we approach schools' decarbonisation and also how we support cathedrals.

The Programme is evidence-led and operates in accordance with the NCIs Project Management Framework. In order for work to proceed under the Programme, Project Briefs are proposed to the Board and, if approved, these are worked up into full Project Proposals which set out the business case for each strand of work. These are then presented to the Programme Board for approval. The Programme Board scrutinises each proposal (in some cases twice) before granting approval. Each approved project or workstream is then required to report regularly to the Board on the progress being made. In this way the Programme applies dynamic cost/benefit principles to the work and will apply what is learned in this phase to future phases, to ensure that the investment in driving carbon emissions reduction is proportionate and is achieving the necessary benefits and outcomes through the most cost-effective means.

It is perhaps also useful to note that others have undertaken cost/benefit analyses of funding climate actions at a national level (see the attached Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment's Policy Brief on What Climate Change will cost the UK, which concludes that the net zero transition – estimated to cost a maximum of 2% of UK GDP - is expected to have a net benefit of around 4% of GDP).

Background:

In February 2020, Synod acknowledged that there is a global climate emergency which is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice. It recognised that the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ and the Fifth Mark of Mission is to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and to sustain, and renew the life of the Earth. The need to tackle climate change is becoming more urgent, with the UN Secretary General saying in March 2023 "...our world needs climate action on all fronts – everything, everywhere, all at once".

The 2022 Routemap to Net Zero is the Church's response to that agenda. Synod's 2030 Net Zero carbon target is hugely ambitious, but the process is as important as the target. Every month or year that we delay our progress towards net zero carbon will lead to suffering and even death for our human neighbours and the rest of God's creation. It is therefore a matter of justice that we act now and it is a key part of our obedience to God's call to care for creation that the transition to net zero carbon takes place as rapidly as possible.

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