

GENERAL SYNOD

The Rev'd Christopher Trundle to move on behalf of the London Diocesan Synod:

That this Synod request the Archbishops' Council to lay a draft order before the Synod to amend the Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2019 so that a fee payable to the parochial church council is prescribed in respect of funeral services that take place at crematoria and cemeteries to reflect the contribution made by parishes in support of such services.

Summary

This motion seeks to secure the amendment of the Draft Parochial Fees Order agreed by General Synod in February 2019 which transferred from the parochial church council to the diocesan board of finance the small fee (then £30, currently £32) for burials or cremations taking place at crematoria or cemeteries where there is no service in church. This fee, we argue, should be returned to the PCC.

Background

1. The Draft Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2019 approved by General Synod in February 2019 included the redirection of the small fee (then £30) due to PCCs in respect of burials or cremations taking place at crematoria or cemeteries when there is no service in church; this fee (currently £32) became payable to the DBF.
2. This particular issue was raised during the General Synod debate on the draft order as a whole. It was remarked that parishes should retain monies only where costs are incurred through the church building being used, as in the case of funerals; at a crematorium or cemetery those expenses do not arise. It was also argued, however, that while the sum involved is not large, it does reflect in a tangible way the time and effort required of clergy, lay ministers and volunteers in this important ministry.

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3. Noting that the Diocese of Derby redirected this small fee to the PCC in 2020, the Hillingdon Deanery Synod brought a motion to the London Diocesan Synod requesting that this be the case in London as well.
4. After debate, the motion was narrowly carried in the London Diocesan Synod on 2nd December 2020. In order for the motion to come to General Synod slight changes to the wording were required; a further motion was passed (amended to include the words, 'to reflect the contribution made by parishes in support of such services') on 4th March 2021; on this occasion the motion was carried overwhelmingly with 65 votes in favour, 5 against, and 5 abstentions.

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This motion

5. The motion asks that a draft Order be brought before Synod to provide that, as before 2020, this sum be payable to the PCC rather than the DBF. The argument for doing so is simple: the fee is the result of the ministry of parish clergy and lay ministers, not the DBF, and it should, therefore, be returned to the PCC.
6. For the parishes where there are many funerals, and for those PCCs where even small sums of money make a significant difference, this minor amendment will be a great encouragement and an acknowledgment of ministry offered.

The Rev'd Christopher Trundle
on behalf of the London Diocesan Synod