

GENERAL SYNOD
JULY 2024 GROUP OF SESSIONS
BUSINESS DONE AT 6.15 P.M.
ON SUNDAY 7TH JULY 2024

HUMAN DIGNITY OF DISABLED CHILDREN (GS 2359A AND GS 2359B)

18 The motion

‘That this Synod, reaffirming its belief that every person is unique and precious and made in the image of God, and endorsing section 6 of the Equality Act (2010):

- a) challenge the common assumption that bringing a disabled child into the world is a tragedy to be avoided;
- b) call upon healthcare providers and other public authorities to improve the support they give to the parents and families of children born with disabilities;
- c) call upon His Majesty’s Government and healthcare providers to ensure that mothers whose unborn child may be disabled in any way are given comprehensive and unbiased information about the condition and support available to them;
- d) call upon dioceses, parishes and chaplaincies to consider how they might better witness to the human dignity of disabled children, including the better pastoral advice and support they might offer to their parents and families.’

was carried following a counted vote of the whole Synod. The voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR	312
AGAINST	0

No abstentions were recorded.

SPECIAL AGENDA I: LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

NATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE MEASURE (GS 2360)

Draft Measure for First Consideration

507 The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “National Church Governance Measure” be considered for revision in committee.’

was carried.

The Chair reported that the Draft National Church Governance Measure stood automatically committed to a Revision Committee and that notice of amendments must be submitted to the Clerk to the Synod not later than 5.30 p.m. on Friday 6th September.

SPECIAL AGENDA III:

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ MOTIONS

INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE WITHIN THE SOUL SURVIVOR NETWORK (GS 2361A AND GS 2361B)

19 The motion

‘That this Synod, being deeply disquieted at the continued controversies over the actual independence of Safeguarding structures within the Church of England, does not accept that an internal Church inquiry into the allegations of abuse and cover-up within the Soul Survivor network is either sufficient or right in principle.

It accordingly calls upon the Archbishops’ Council to commission, on agreed terms of reference with survivors, a report into those allegations from an independent King’s Counsel without delay.’

was moved.

60 The amendment (Order Paper IV) was carried following a counted vote by Houses. The voting was as follows:

	FOR	AGAINST
BISHOPS	20	2
CLERGY	84	75
LAITY	80	78

8 abstentions were recorded in the House of Bishops, 7 in House of Clergy, and 6 in House of Laity.

EXTENSION OF SITTING

Under Standing Order 15(6), the sitting was extended by 15 minutes by the Chair with the consent of the Synod.

19 The motion (as amended)

‘That this Synod, conscious of the ongoing safeguarding work around independence underway following the publication of the reports by Dr Sarah Wilkinson and Professor Alexis Jay.

- a) express deep sorrow for all instances of abuse within God’s church, regardless of who committed them, and condemn in the strongest possible terms any and all attempts to cover up abuse;
- b) reaffirm its commitment to listen to survivors and seek justice on their behalf;
- c) call upon the Archbishops’ Council to:
 - i. ensure that learning from the review into allegations of abuse within the Soul Survivor network currently being undertaken by independent King’s Counsel Fiona Scolding, is considered in any recommendations relating to the Future of Church Safeguarding;
 - ii. engage with relevant survivors to understand their perspective on the review’s conclusions;

- iii. continue to embed the National Safeguarding Standards into every Church of England ministry setting, and commend the points raised in GS 2361A;
- iv. highlight the importance of healthy cultures and urge further theological reflection in guarding against potential abused of power and promoting safe and wise leadership, and around the ethics of social media; and
- v. commend the steps being taken by the National Safeguarding Team to ensure that victims and survivors have proper support including explanation of any legal processes – including the Clergy Discipline Measure – they find themselves involved with.’

was carried following a counted vote by the whole Synod. The voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR	303
AGAINST	20

38 abstentions were recorded.

EVENING WORSHIP

The Synod was led in an act of worship by the Deans.