

GENERAL SYNOD

July 2024

QUESTIONS

of which notice has been given under Standing Orders 112–116.

The Business Committee has scheduled two and a half hours for Questions at the July 2024 Group of Sessions of the General Synod. This is divided between the afternoon of Friday 5 and the morning of Saturday 6 July. Notice has been given of 221 questions. Members are reminded that questions must be submitted to the persons or groups listed in Standing Order 112(1).

Notes for members on Supplementary Questions

These notes have been included at the request of the Business Committee. They are intended to assist members by explaining the requirements of the Standing Orders relating to supplementary questions. The relevant Standing Orders are SO 113 and 115 and are available [here](#).

1. A member may ask only one supplementary question in respect of each original question contained in this Notice Paper.
2. Unless the Chair specifically allows more, two is the maximum number of supplementary questions that may be asked in respect of each original question.
3. The member who asked the original question has priority in asking the first supplementary question if he or she wishes to ask one.
4. A supplementary question must be short, succinct and strictly relevant to the original question or the answer given. A supplementary question must not be preceded by a preamble, except insofar that it is strictly necessary for context.
5. A supplementary question must not contain “argument or imputation”. A question will be taken to include argument if it clearly seeks to advance a particular case by the way in which the question is expressed. A question will be taken to include imputation if it expressly or impliedly includes an accusation of wrongdoing or other reprehensible behaviour.
6. A supplementary question must not ask for an expression of opinion, including on a question of law, or for the solution of a hypothetical problem. In other words, a question must be about, and be capable of being answered by reference to, factual matters.
7. The Chair is obliged to rule a question out of order if it does not comply with the requirements of SOs 113 and 115. Where that happens, given the number of questions to be answered, the Chair is unlikely to have time to give other than a very brief reason why a member’s question is out of order. Under SO 15(2), the Chair’s determination of a question of order, business or procedure is not open to debate or question.

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COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

- Q1** How has the number of NCI staff working directly in the area of Christian Unity changed over the past ten years? Given the increasing importance of ecumenical work in a world of fractured relationships, in need of signs of hope, are there any plans to increase financial support for the CCU Team?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe to reply as Deputy Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

A In 2014, there were six staff members working in CCU, but also serving the Faith and Order Commission and the House of Bishops: 4 x full-time equivalent (FTE) (one of these provided administrative support), and 2 x 0.5 FTE. There were also 2 staff members at Lambeth Palace, 1 at FTE and 1 at 0.5 FTE (administrative support). In total this amounted to 5 x FTE, and 3 x 0.5 FTE appointed to work on ecumenical and theological matters, i.e. 8 staff in all. The Theological Advisor role is now separate and so comparison is difficult, but the ecumenical sub-team in the Faith and Public Life team now combines both the Council for Christian Unity and Lambeth Palace staff and stands at 2 x FTE and 1 x 0.5 FTE (administrative support), with an additional 0.2 FTE. This reduction in staffing is challenging, and inevitably has meant significant contraction in capacity. I am not aware of plans to increasing staffing. It is vital that the Church's ecumenical work is resourced adequately.

The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

Q2 Please can the General Synod be informed about progress in respect of the Methodist-Anglican Covenant, and especially the review of 'Mission and Ministry in Covenant' requested in 2017?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe to reply as Deputy Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

A In 2019 the General Synod requested the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) to work with the Methodist Church's F&O Committee to prepare draft texts for a formal declaration of ministerial interchangeability, an inaugural service(s), and guidelines for the reception of presbyters/priests, along with other matters, and the House of Bishops was directed to report back on progress within the next quinquennium of Synod. Work was paused by the pandemic, by the pressure of other business, and by both churches seeking a period of reflection. Life in Covenant, the new Anglican/Methodist body, reporting to CCU, with the support of the Methodist Council has begun preliminary work as requested. Report on progress will be made to Synod in this quinquennium, though it is likely that full texts will not be ready before the next quinquennium.

Mrs Catherine Stephenson (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

Q3 In light of 2024 marking the 21st anniversary of 'An Anglican-Methodist Covenant', when will General Synod be informed of its progress, especially through the out-workings of the body 'Life in Covenant' since the commitment to its formation was made by General Synod in 2021?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe to reply as Deputy Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:

A With the support of the Methodist Council and the Council for Christian Unity, Life in Covenant (the successor body to the Joint Covenant Implementation Group) has begun work on planning and scheduling the preparation of texts towards the possible implementation of the *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* (MMiC) proposals laid before Synod in 2018 and 2019. This work will take some time and requires coordination between both churches' faith and order bodies, and consultation with other bodies such as the Liturgical Commission. It is expected that, as requested by Synod, a report to Synod on progress on MMiC will be made in the quinquennium of this Synod, although final texts are unlikely to be ready before the end of the quinquennium and will therefore need to come to the next quinquennium of Synod.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q4 Has any recent analysis been undertaken as to why so few people are currently coming forward for ordination and are being ordained into the Church of England, and, if so, what are the key reasons given?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A For context, the number of people recommended to train for ordained ministry over the last eight years is as follows:

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Recommendations	541	580	551	591	501	374	379	370*

**estimated*

The National Vocations Team together with the Lead Bishop for Renewing Ministerial Vocations, Sam Corley, Bishop of Stockport have held a series of six Renewing Ministerial Vocations Conversations in York, London, Cambridge, Bristol, Leicester and Manchester. The series began on 10 May and concluded on 17 June. Over 100 people attended the conversations representing 37 dioceses and 14 TELs with a range of delegates including Directors of Mission and Ministry, Leaders of Lay Ministries, DDO's, DDV's, Principals and Tutors. We are very grateful for this level of engagement and investment of time and energy.

In total over sixty different factors were identified which contribute to the current, complex vocational picture across the church. A full report will go to the Ministry Council in September for discussion and response. As an interim indicator prior to the full report, all participants were asked to identify the three most influential factors affecting vocations. Out of a total of 354 votes cast, the top factors identified were:

Local clergy wellbeing	71
Demographic changes in society	28
Lack of Diocesan Resources for vocations outreach work	24
Institutional suspicion	23
LLF (substance and tone)	21
Clergy stipend/package	21

Another clear theme was that whilst numbers of candidates for longer programmes for licenced and ordained ministries had reduced, many dioceses have found shorter, more focussed training and formational programmes for lay ministries were strongly supported and, in some cases, oversubscribed.

The Revd Canon Paul Bradbury (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q5 With the phasing out of pioneer specific selection panels, what is being done to ensure that those with a call to ordained pioneer ministry are being discerned and enabled along that pathway? How many selectors with pioneer experience and gifting have been recruited and trained to act as selectors? What proportion of selection panels have someone with pioneer experience and gifting on them?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A It is not possible to assess what proportion of Panels have Bishops' Advisers with pioneering experience or gifting on them.

However, we have around 25 trained Bishops' Advisers for Discernment with pioneering experience (about 7% of the active Bishops' Advisers), with two more ready to be trained.

In 2023 we ran two training sessions for (A)DDOs on the Qualities for Discernment for Ordained Pioneer Ministers and made the material available to all (A)DDOs. These qualities are aligned with the core qualities used in discernment and were shaped by the former National Adviser for Pioneer Ministry working with the National Ministry Team.

The Revd Mark Miller (Durham) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q6 The National ordination selection panels appear to run late into the academic year, for instance there is a panel in very late July this year. Successful candidates at this panel would not have time to make a good transition to residential training, for example, their children and school goodbyes/new schools, employment notice periods. The late panel also impacts on TEI's planning. Why do these panels operate so late in the year and what steps are being taken to run them earlier in the year to enable a better annual cycle for candidates and TEIs?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of The Ministry Council:

A We have been trying to move panels earlier for as long as I can remember, for the reasons implied in the question. There is, though, a regular demand for Panels as late in the academic year as possible to give maximum time to prepare candidates and to ensure all candidates who are ready can attend a Panel. The two-staged Shared Discernment Process has, unintentionally, intensified this long-standing summer bottle-neck and we are seeking to address this.

A group of DDOs and TEIs have been meeting with the discernment team this year to seek a way forward and address the various needs.

August panels have been removed for 2023-24. In 2024-25 the last panel will be one week earlier, and in intention is to have the last panel for 2025-26 in mid-July.

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q7 Further to the *Church Times* article by Mike Edwards on May 10th, are the Remuneration and Services Committee actively considering the introduction of a transparent centralised process for Ordinand grant calculations? Are they also exploring that their rent be paid directly?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A As part of the introduction of Resourcing Ministerial Formation, Ministry Council has commissioned an Ordinand Maintenance Working Group which is developing proposals for a simplified process which will provide appropriate financial support including housing for full time ordinands and their families. Ministry Council reviewed their progress in May and will consider their final proposals in the autumn with a view to any changes taking effect in autumn 2025.

Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q8 How many dioceses routinely informed prospective ordinands to sell property prior to training, and what is the latest date on which this is known to have happened?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A This is a matter that has caused regrettable distress to some clergy, especially for some who are approaching retirement or have retired. While the practice appeared to be widespread in the 1970s and 1980s and in some dioceses may have continued into the 1990s, and even as late as the mid-2000s, we are not aware that formal national or diocesan policies have ever existed in which prospective ordinands were required to sell property prior to training. This means that obtaining reliable data on any such practice is extremely difficult to obtain.

However, it is important to note that the Church has provided, and continues to provide and fund, secure housing for all who need it in retirement.

The Revd Christopher Johnson (Leicester) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q9 Bearing in mind the recent increased discussion of office-holder vs employee status, what information and training about the implications of office-holding is factored into discernment & training curriculums for ordinands and new clergy?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Being an office holder is the long-established default employment status for stipendiary clergy within the Church of England. As such, it is implicitly woven into the fabric of vocational development for all clergy, but the provision of specific training on the particularities of the differences between employment and office holding is not a formal requirement of the first half of initial ministerial formation which TEIs are responsible for. However, some TEIs do offer training in this area and the appointment to a title post and then first incumbency are good opportunities for the rights and responsibilities associated with officer holder status to be explored within the dioceses.

The Ven Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q10 How is the Church of England's ministry strategy ensuring that TEIs equip future clergy for the reality of ministry in a church where multi-parish ministry is becoming the norm and where Dioceses are increasingly developing collaborative forms of ministry, such as Oversight Areas, Mission Communities and Missional Deaneries?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A This is an important question which is recognised by the Council and TEIs and continues to inform practice. The range of contexts in which clergy minister in is very diverse (rural, suburban, urban, outer-estate, inner-city, civic, cathedral, pioneering, planting, multi-parish, prison chaplaincy, school chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, hospital chaplaincy etc). TEIs are the providers of the first half of training (IME1) and provide this training within the national formation guidelines. They are required to provide placement opportunities for ordinands during IME1 but no one ordinand can be expected to cover all the possible ministerial eventualities before ordination. Dioceses have responsibility for IME2 and have a responsibility to provide curates in training with further development opportunities to equip them for the diverse contexts in which they will minister.

The Revd Dr Sean Doherty (Universities & TEIs) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q11 Please could you provide details of any additional resources that are made available to enable reasonable adjustments for disability within the vocations, discernment and training processes for ordination, and in senior leadership development?

The Bishop of Chester to answer as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Provision for disability is made on an individual level presently.

Specific vocational events are being run for deaf, disabled and neurodivergent enquirers which aim to meet a range of access needs.

The National Discernment Team have experience in meeting a range of access needs on a bespoke basis to enable candidates to attend Stage 1 and 2 discernment panels where needs are notified in advance.

There is a disability fund for the provision of learning support for ordinands and those in training for licenced lay ministries.

Every participant in our Leadership Development Programmes (Archdeacons, Deans, Bishops and participants in the Strategic Leadership Development Programme) is encouraged to communicate their specific access and learning needs in relation to any disability (visible or invisible) and this is actioned according to the need. This has included supporting people with physical needs and impaired hearing, neurodivergent people and accommodating and supporting carers.

Ms Fiona MacMillan (London) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council

Q12 What resources are available to support disabled and neurodivergent ordinands, curates, lay and ordained ministers to flourish in the context of our desire for greater diversity yet shrinking diocesan budgets and with a quarter of dioceses still without a Diocesan Disability Adviser – a commitment first made almost 30 years ago?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of The Ministry Council:

A We remain committed to ensuring the ministerial vocation of all people can be recognised, encouraged and lived out whilst recognising there is still much work to do in supporting people with disabilities and neurodivergent people and in removing barriers to ministry. To this end:

- The Enabling Leaders Programme launched its first cohort in 2023 supporting the leadership development of deaf, disabled and neurodivergent clergy;
- A national 48 hour conference for Diocesan Disability Advisers took place in November 2023;
- In December 2023, £2.3m of Triennium Funding was awarded to the Disability Task Group to fund work towards the greater inclusion of deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in the Church. This included amongst other elements, funding for training and networking for the Deaf Ministry Network; a second Enabling Leaders programme; a series of events aimed at promoting lay and ordained vocations among deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people; communications support; and funding for a Disability Project Manager to oversee and manage the range of projects funded;
- The Queen’s Foundation has recently been awarded £118,000 RMF Innovation Funding for a three year research project to develop good practice in ministerial formation of neurodivergent ministers in training;
- The National Vocations Team hosted the first national gathering encouraging the ministerial vocations of deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in March this year with over 70 people signing up. Another event is planned for September shortly followed by a series of in-person vocations events hosted by the Disability Project Manager.
- Maintenance payments and learning support grants are available to eligible ordinands in training. Some TEIs teams include specialist learning support staff. As of 2023, learning support grants are also available to those training for licensed lay ministries.
- Stipendiary clergy and employed ministers are eligible for support from the government’s Access to Work scheme. The Ministry Development Team issued guidance at the end of 2022 to help dioceses and employers support deaf, disabled and neurodivergent ministers in applying for support.
- Alongside Synod (GS 1663 (July 2007)) we encourage all dioceses to work towards the appointment of a Diocesan Disability Adviser where this important role is not currently filled.

- We encourage all dioceses in the process of developing their strategy towards becoming younger and more diverse to ensure that provision for widening participation of deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in all areas of church life is central to their plans.

The Revd Neil Patterson (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q13 Has the Ministry Council considered the possibility of allowing Vote 1 funding for ordination pathways outside the parameters of the Bishops' Guidelines, such as the St Mellitus Caleb Stream?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A Ministry Council is always open to applications for new formational pathways for those who have engaged with the national shared discernment process. We are especially interested in applications that increase the diversity of those able to access training for ordained ministry in the church. All applications are evaluated based on their ability to meet the formational outcomes of the IME1. To date, no such application has been received from any TEI offering the Caleb pathway.

Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q14 What were the numbers of male and female clergy in each diocese in the year ending December 2022, grouped by those in senior roles, those in parish ministry and those in other roles? What were the numbers of male and female clergy in the year ending December 2022, grouped by role and age?

Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Council:

Q15 What were the numbers of male and female SSM clergy in each diocese in the year ending December 2022? What were the numbers of male and female SSM clergy grouped by age?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Council:

A With the permission of the Chair, I will answer questions 14 and 15 together.

Thank you for your question, and for your patience as we have been working to produce these figures. We are sorry for the long wait. The figures requested, along with updated versions of other data tables previously included in Ministry Statistics reports, will be placed on the Noticeboard.

NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL

Mr Guy Hordern (Birmingham) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q16 The Church of England is a member of the Religious Education Council, which is advocating, as Religious Education, the teaching of Religion and Worldviews in all Schools. What is the content of Religion and Worldviews?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A The National Society actively seeks to promote high-quality learning in RE as an essential aspect of the curriculum. As a member of the RE Council, we welcome the opportunity to learn about and celebrate innovative approaches to RE teaching which ensure excellent outcomes for pupils. A Religion and Worldviews approach is intentionally multi-disciplinary and explores the diversity that exists within religions, religious and non-religious worldviews.

A number of diocesan advisers have been instrumental in the development of Religion and Worldview approaches. Their contribution to shaping the subject enables Church of England schools to stay at the forefront of RE practice.

The National Content Standard, which we have endorsed, sets a clear standard for the breadth, depth and ambition of RE curriculum content. The Church of England Statement of Entitlement continues to set out the minimum standards for RE in Church schools, whatever approach is followed.

Ms Clare Williams (Norwich) to ask Chair of the National Society Council:

Q17 What success criteria and sustainability planning are being applied to the FLOURISH worshipping communities, to be set up in schools across 13 pilot Dioceses, in order to ensure they continue beyond the proposed two academic years and also link strategically to the already existing worshipping communities within the local areas where they are set up?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A The FLOURISH pilot commences in Autumn 2024 in 40 locations (primary/secondary/Further Education) across 12 dioceses. In each location it is a strategic partnership between the education setting and its local church. It is part of the Church's wider vision to see a flourishing worshipping community within reach of every child/young person in the country. The pilot will involve measuring engagement of children, young people and their families, some of which will be quantitative – for example evaluating attendance and participation patterns – and some of which will be qualitative – for example evaluating journeys of faith, discipleship, and transition into next phase (for example from primary to secondary).

In each pilot diocese, detailed planning has already been undertaken to ensure that the pilot locations align strategically with other development activities (both new and existing), ensuring that children and young people are central to the dioceses' vision and strategy. These dioceses already intend to use the 2-year pilot to evaluate whether longer-term and larger scale engagement in the FLOURISH model could form part of future Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment proposals, with learning to be actively shared with all other dioceses throughout the pilot to inform every diocese's strategic planning.

Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q18 Please can you confirm which parents' groups, medical and mental health professionals, and other stakeholders have been consulted in the revision of *Valuing All God's Children*?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A Draft anti-bullying guidance is being published this term as promised. It is a little later than planned due to the pre-election period but will be published for consultation in order to give schools time to respond before the end of term. It is underpinned by our Vision for Education and written with reference to recent government guidance and the review by Dr Hilary Cass. We consulted with children and young people as well as school leaders and diocesan education teams in drafting of it. There will be a period of wider consultation which will be open to anyone who would like to contribute through the form on our website.

Dr Julie Maxwell (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q19 The Cass Review final report was published in April. Given the evidence, research findings and recommendations made as part of that review what changes have been made to guidance for Church of England schools?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A New anti-bullying guidance is being published this term as promised. It is a little later than planned due to the pre-election period. Our guidance is all about the

prevention of bullying. It references, but does not attempt to duplicate, the extensive work carried out by Dr Hilary Cass in her recently published review.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q20 What is the projected cost of *Flourishing for All* and will funding for it be coming from Stonewall or other activist groups, as with *Valuing All God's Children*?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A New guidance is being written and produced by the National Society using internal staff resources within the Education Office. It has not been published yet because of the pre-election period, but when it has, we will be glad to answer any questions on it.

Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q21 In the light of the imminent withdrawal of the *Valuing All Gods Children* Guidance following on from the Judicial Review in the case of Nigel and Sally Rowe, the draft government guidance on gender questioning children and the Cass Review, will the National Society encourage the Diocese of Portsmouth to issue an apology for the letter sent to Nigel and Sally Rowe from their primary school in 2017, on the advice of the Diocese, labelling them guilty of "transphobic behaviour" for raising their legitimate concerns about the well-being of pupils and for refusing to believe that 8 year old boys had become girls?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A As has always been stated, we are issuing new guidance, not for all the reasons suggested in the question, but certainly following government draft guidance on gender questioning children being released and the final report of the review by Dr Hilary Cass being published. Dr Cass outlines in her report how "the polarisation and stifling of debate does nothing to help the young people caught in the middle of a stormy social discourse, and in the long run will also hamper the research that is essential to finding the best way of supporting them to thrive." She also says that the toxicity of the debate is exceptional and leads to some of the worst bullying behaviour. Our hope is that the government's guidance and the Cass review will enable schools and others to be better placed to help gender questioning children. Our anti-bullying guidance is being published a little later than planned due to the pre-election period, but it will seek to ensure that the best pastoral care leads to flourishing for all.

Mr Benjamin John (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q22 The Church of England stated following the publication of the Cass Review that: "We agree with Dr Cass's conclusions that, as far as any form of social transitioning is concerned, a very cautious approach is necessary, and should involve full collaboration and consultation with parents and medical professionals. Something we have always maintained".

Given the numerous claims that *Valuing All God's Children* did take an "affirming" approach, please can the National Society provide evidence, for example previous statements and reports, which called for "a very cautious approach"?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A There have been many claims and assertions made about *Valuing All God's Children*, some of which have been misrepresentations of a resource which is designed to help schools ensure all children are treated with the dignity they deserve. *Valuing All God's Children* was intended to help schools tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and we have always maintained

that, in all the complexity of this subject, work is best carried out in close partnership with parents.

Mr Benjamin John (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q23 The Bishop of Portsmouth said in answer to Q221 in February that "Many people, schools, organisations, media outlets and campaigning groups and their legal teams cite *Valuing All God's Children* (VAGC) for a range of reasons. Often such citations are misrepresentative of the document itself which has never purported to be guidance about how schools respond to gender questioning children – it is about prevention of bullying and affording each child their dignity".

VAGC states "pupils will be equipped to accept difference of all varieties and be supported to accept their own gender identity or sexual orientation and that of others" (p20). This could reasonably be interpreted as advising a particular approach to responding to gender questioning children.

Has the National Society considered why there is confusion about the document and considered an apology for the way it which it has been used to justify practices in schools that have been criticised by the Cass Review?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A *Valuing All God's Children* did not advise a particular approach to responding to gender questioning children, but the absence of government guidance on the subject has led to some commentators assuming that was its purpose despite this never being the case. Now that the government draft guidance is released and the final report of the review by Dr Hilary Cass has been published, we will, as promised, be replacing *Valuing All God's Children* with new resources to offer support for schools as they tackle bullying of all kinds.

The Revd Martin Davy (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q24 What material is available from the Education team which can be used to teach children about sex before and outside marriage that is faithful to the Church's own doctrine as expressed in Canon B 30?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A The National Society does not produce resources for teaching Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RSHE), but our faith sensitive approach to RSHE outlined on our website encourages all schools to explain the tenets and varying interpretations of religious communities on matters of sex and relationships and teach these viewpoints with respect.

Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the National Society Council:

Q25 With the University of Kent at Canterbury stopping all Theology and Religious Studies courses, has the Church negotiated either a return of monies or what the monies should be used for moving forward which we contributed to the Michael Ramsey Chair of Theology at the University, as with no further courses the monies cannot be used for their original purpose?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply as Chair of the National Society Council:

A In partnership with the University of Kent at Canterbury, staff will be following up any potential implications of the University's decision to cease recruitment to its theology and religious studies programmes from September 2024 for the Michael Ramsey Chair of Applied Theology.

REMUNERATION & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q26 How does the current level of clergy stipend in the Church of England compare with stipend levels in other members of the Anglican Communion in the Western/developed world?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A Producing an answer to this question would take a disproportionate amount of staff time. However, I have reproduced a table from the Remuneration Review relating to 2019/20 and 2020/21. The table needs to be interpreted with some care as total packages vary, for example with different pension and housing provision.

	Stipend
Church of England	NSB £26,470(2019) £27,000 (2020) NMS £24,770 (2019) £25,265 (2020)
Scottish Episcopal Church (2020)	NSB £27,000 Curates in training receive £24,300 in their first year (90% stipend), rising to 92.5% stipend in their second year, and £25,650 (95%) in their third year.
Church in Wales (CiW) (2020)	Incumbent £25,363 Assistant curate, Cathedral Chaplain £21,559 Incumbent of a Rectorial Benefice £26,631
Church of Ireland (2019) Terms differ between NI and the Republic	Minimum Approved Stipends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland = £29,603 Republic of Ireland = €37,855
Anglican/ Episcopal Church in Australia (2019)	NMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant ministers and lay ministers: 1st and 2nd year: \$56,769 rising to \$63,448 5th + year Student ministers: Studying for degree: \$8,348 Studying for diploma: \$6,679
Episcopal Church in USA (Diocese of New York taken as an example) There is variation between dioceses & even parishes. (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordained fewer than 3 years: \$46,000 3 to 10 years: \$51,100 10 to 15 years: \$51,600 Over 15 years: \$58,500

The Ven Adrian Youngs (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q27 The 2001 report of the Stipends Review Group, 'Generosity and Sacrifice', proposed that an appropriate benchmark for clergy stipends would be 80% of the starting salary of the Head Teaching of a large primary school. How has the clergy stipend compared with that figure over the last 20 years?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A In 2001, the Head Teacher figure (after reduction by 20% and a deduction to take account of provided housing) was £19,748, compared with a National Stipend Benchmark (NSB) of £16,910. In 2023, the equivalent figures are £37,504 (Head teacher) and £28,648 for the NSB.

Significant changes in thinking since *Generosity and Sacrifice* raise questions about its methodology.

Aspiration 3 of *Generosity and Sacrifice* that the incumbent's stipend should be set at this level -was considered unaffordable, as a result of wider external economic changes, especially in pensions, and various global financial crises. It was, therefore, never adopted.

The 2021 Remuneration Review concluded as follows:

- the value of the housing element in *Generosity and Sacrifice* was significantly underestimated and a different methodology is now used, which results in a significantly higher value to the package that is no longer behind that of 80% of a head teacher's starting salary minus housing);
- there is not a single comparable profession against which the appropriateness of clergy remuneration could be measured. All other professions suggested are likely to prove contestable, with significant differences as well as similarities.
- responses to the clergy survey indicated that there was little enthusiasm among clergy for secular models of reward.

The Revd Preb Rosie Austin (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q28 Are steps being taken in any Dioceses to assess clergy workload, or to actively consider how wellbeing is connected to the culture of a six day working week for both Full Time and Part Time clergy?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A The House of Bishops recently discussed clergy wellbeing and noted that changing the culture of a six-day working week would be conducive to clergy wellbeing. Many dioceses already encourage clergy to take a 48-hour rest period once a month, but we do not have details of exactly how many. Wellbeing needs to be primarily delivered locally. Resources in dioceses are already under considerable pressure which limits the amount of information that the NCIs are able to ask them to provide.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

Q29 With reference to Paternity Leave following the birth or adoption of a child – are there Dioceses and/or NCIs where their policy offers more than the minimum statutory requirement?

The Bishop of Hereford to reply as Chair of the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee:

A Office holders with a least 26 weeks' service have a statutory entitlement to paternity leave of 2 weeks. Guidance for dioceses to enable them to update their policies for office holders was issued by the Archbishops' Council in 2020. This recommends 2 weeks' paternity leave *regardless of length of service*. We do not know what the actual provision is for paternity leave in every diocese, but a recent audit indicates that 33 out of 36 dioceses with details on their websites have maternity provision greater than the statutory minimum. We are following up on this audit to see if dioceses are updating their websites and policies in response and contacting dioceses individually about it.

For employees, the NCIs give an additional third week's paid paternity leave for employees with more than 1 year's service, as well as enhanced parental leave. We have no information on diocesan provision for their own employees.

COMMITTEE FOR MINORITY ETHNIC ANGLICAN CONCERNS

The Revd Folli Olokose (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

Q30 As part of resolution GS 2338 passed at the last Group of Session, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns is expected to be reshaped/strengthened in collaboration with the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice and the Racial Justice Unit. Considering the required time frame, would the Committee be able to update the Synod on the progress made on this subject?

The Dean of Manchester to reply as Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

A As the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice (ACRJ) draws to the end of its three-year term in November, and noting that CMEAC is currently reviewing its role, in May 2024, the Archbishops Council approved a Task Group comprised of members of the Archbishops' Council, CMEAC, ACRJ, and AMEN, to recommend a future governance structure to oversee the work of racial justice within the Church. The Task Group will review achievements so far under From Lament To Action (FLTA) and based on future needs, recommend an effective structure for overseeing racial justice at the national level, and ensuring the work of racial justice is mainstreamed and sets a compelling agenda for change across the Church.

The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

Q31 What work is underway to establish a zero-tolerance approach to racism in the local, diocesan and national church, and who is overseeing this?

The Dean of Manchester to reply as Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:

A The Church of England has committed itself to "significant cultural and structural change" on issues of racial justice. This is being achieved through the implementation of *From Lament To Action* (FLTA), under the purview of the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice (ACRJ) whose 3-year term ends in November, the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC), which is to be reconstituted and terms of reference updated, and a Racial Justice Directorate operating as part of the NCIs for a 5-year period to ensure delivery, monitoring and accountability for the actions outlined in FLTA. In endorsing FLTA, the Archbishops committed to be "*the generation to halt this cycle of inaction...to be leaders who will bring real change.*" On specific matters of racism, the ACRJ is investigating racial incidents to determine whether systems are in place to address experiences of racism and the extent to which existing policies and procedures are effective.

MISSION & PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The Revd Nicki Pennington (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q32 What actions has the Church of England taken to support the Churches in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, particularly since October 7th 2023?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A The Church has long-standing and extensive relationships with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem that has enabled it to provide much needed support since 7th October.

The Archbishop of Canterbury visited in October 2023 and the bishops of Southwark, Chelmsford and Gloucester visited in January, May and June 2024 respectively. These visits provided an opportunity to meet with, listen to and pray with the local church.

In October 2023 the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem launched a joint appeal calling for prayers and donations both for the vital work of Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and also for the wide range of ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem which are also being greatly affected by the war.

The Archbishops and the House of Bishops have also repeatedly pressed for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the release of all hostages, unfettered and unrestricted aid to those in need and a resumption of negotiations to find a solution that provides security for Israelis, justice for Palestinians and peace for all.

The Church's website provides information for those seeking to better understand the Church's response to the war and guidance on how to help whether through prayer, giving or action.

Mrs Catherine Butcher (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

Q33 I am grateful for the Bishop of Chelmsford's pledge to pray for Layan Nasir, the 23-year-old Palestinian Christian seized in a West Bank raid in April and taken into 'administrative detention' without evidence being presented or charges being made against her. Her detention prompted a call for her release from the Archbishop of Canterbury. She has still been denied visits from a lawyer or her family – what further steps can we take as General Synod to challenge this injustice?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply as Chair of the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

A Layan Nasir, from the Anglican parish of Berzeit, is currently being detained without legal proceedings, by order of the regional military court, based on classified evidence that leaves her facing unknown allegations with no way to disapprove them, not knowing when she will be released, all the time without being charged, tried or convicted.

This is a most worrying situation as is the fact that her transfer outside the West Bank to Damon Prison is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Her lawyers worry that her administrative detention will be renewed for a further 4 months when it expires on 6 August.

Sadly, there are thousands of other Palestinians currently experiencing administrative detention.

In addition to following the Bishop of Chelmsford's lead, I encourage General Synod members to write to the Israeli Ambassador to ask that she be released immediately and that in the meantime her parish priest be allowed to visit her.

I know that the Bishop of Gloucester, following a meeting with Layan's parents in June, intends to raise her case in the House of Lords. I ask that Members lobby their MPs to press the Foreign Secretary to raise this matter with Israeli counterparts.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q34 What roles and powers are granted by the Worship and Doctrine Measure to (a) The House of Laity and (b) The House of Bishops in relation to the introduction of new liturgy within the Church of England?

Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:

A The Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974 does not directly confer functions on the House of Bishops or the House of Laity. It makes it lawful for the General Synod “to make provision by Canon with respect to worship in the Church of England, including provision for empowering the General Synod to approve, amend, continue or discontinue forms of service.” That provision is contained in Canon B 2 (Of the Approval of Forms of Service). Section 3 of the Measure provides that no approval by the General Synod of a form of service has effect unless it “has been finally approved by the General Synod with a majority in each House thereof of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting”.

Canon Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q35 What are the canonical roles of (a) General Synod and (b) The House of Bishops in relation to the introduction of liturgy?

Dr Gracy Crane (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q36 What are the canonical roles of a) the General Synod and b) the House of Bishops in relation to the introduction of liturgy?

Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:

A With permission, I will answer questions 35 and 36 together.

Canon B 2 makes it lawful for the General Synod to approve and amend forms of service for use in the Church of England, either for a limited period or without limit of time, and to extend or discontinue the use of forms of service. The procedure for the Synod’s consideration of forms of service (“liturgical business”) is set out in the Standing Orders. SO 80(1) provides that for First Consideration, liturgical business may be circulated to members only on the instructions of the House of Bishops. Under article 7 of the Constitution of the General Synod, liturgical business must, “before it is finally approved by the General Synod, be referred to the House of Bishops, and shall be submitted for such final approval in terms proposed by the House of Bishops and not otherwise”.

Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the Business Committee:

Q37 After each General Synod, a satisfaction survey is sent to members. May we know the % voting in each response category, in answer to the initial question about overall satisfaction? May we please have this for the last three Groups of Sessions (ie July, Nov 2023 and Feb 2024)?

Canon Robert Hammond to reply as Chair of the Business Committee:

A The figures for February 2024 were included in the Report of the Business Committee (GS 2353), and we propose to include this in each Report of the Business Committee at future groups of sessions so members will be aware of the responses from members on this specific question.

It is heartening to see that over time, the number of members rating the overall satisfaction of the group of sessions as good or very good has increased.

In summary, the responses were as follows:

February 2024:

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FEBRUARY 2024 GENERAL SYNOD MEETING OVERALL?

Answered:179 Very poor Poor Neutral Good Very good

Skipped:11

Your rating 2 8 46 96 27

November 2023:

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE NOVEMBER 2023 GENERAL SYNOD MEETING OVERALL?

Answered:161	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Skipped:8					
Your rating	14	22	50	66	9

July 2023:

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE NOVEMBER 2023 GENERAL SYNOD MEETING OVERALL?

Answered:163	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Skipped:25					
Your rating	11	39	53	57	3

CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION

The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

Q38 Given the answer to both the initial Q84 in Feb 2024 and the follow-up question (which stated that the principle limiting factor on CNC meetings is the diary constraints of the Archbishops), what consideration has been given to increased utilisation of the powers available to the Archbishops under SO137(5) to clear the backlog of CNC appointments and if none, will they commit to now doing so?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:

A At a time of unprecedented demand in the senior appointments system, we are aware of the additional pressure placed on individuals, dioceses and on the central appointments system, and recognise the understandable desire of people to have vacancies filled.

The availability of the Archbishops is only *one* consideration in the planning of CNCs. It takes time for a discernment process to flourish, in addition to a considerable investment of resource and intricate planning in the diocese and national Church.

The power available under Standing Order 137(5) has been, and continues to be, used where necessary, thus ensuring that the process may continue even when the Archbishop of the Province is unavailable to preside at a meeting of the CNC from their Province. In such circumstances, Standing Order (138 (4)) also dictates that, in the absence of the Archbishop required to preside, the other Archbishop must preside and, if this is not possible, one of the Central Members must preside in their place (SO 138 (5)).

The Chairs of the Crown Nominations Commission will continue to consult together and with others on what can be done to move Diocesan Bishop appointments through as expeditiously as possible.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS (LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH)

Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q39 How many lay members over the age of 65 expressed an interest in participating in the recently convened LLF working groups and how many lay members over the age of 65 were subsequently appointed to the working groups?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The LLF process has always sought to engage with a range of stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds. The proposal outlined in GS 2358 includes plans for further discussions in working groups and the opportunity for wider consultations in dioceses. The question is a helpful reminder of the vital role older people play in the

life of our church and the next stage of the process is intended to hear the voice of this group alongside others.

The Revd Dr Charlie Bell (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q40 Given the explicit commitment to listening to and involvement of LGBTQIA+ people as part of the ongoing LLF process in each of the papers brought to Synod since February 2023, and the ongoing lack of visible representation of LGBTQIA+ people in the House and College of Bishops, what process of active monitoring is taking place at national and diocesan level to ensure LGBTQIA+ people are involved at an executive as well as an advisory level in the implementation of the LLF project?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Participation from people who self-identify as LGBTQIA+ (or as same-sex attracted) is actively sought and forms part of the criteria for establishing the diverse membership of LLF working and advisory groups. This principle has also been extended to the membership of the LLF Programme Board. My awareness of work in dioceses is that similar best practice would also be followed. The LLF Programme Team does not, however, have any access to broader data on this.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q41 When members of the LLF groups met with the College of Bishops on 13 June, none of them were shown the paper given to the bishops which reported on the groups' discussions. Who made the decision not to circulate this paper, on what grounds, and how does this accord with the 'reset' commitment to greater transparency, accountability, and due process—and has this now been rectified?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Non-episcopal members of the LLF Working Groups were invited to express interest and availability to attend discussions at the College of Bishops. The failure to distribute the confidential paper for the LLF item to the thirteen Working Group members attending the College was an oversight. An apology was made to the participants on the day.

In finalising the paper for the General Synod, a further draft of the paper was sent to the College of Bishops and all Working Group members with the opportunity to send comments for the LLF Programme Board to consider in finalising the paper for the General Synod. Clarifications and changes were made in the light of this feedback.

The Working Group engagement in this phase of the LLF process has been exceptionally important. A wide range of learning has already been gathered and further feedback will be sought on how such a process might be enhanced in developing the detail of any future proposal.

Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q42 What steps have been taken to ensure the current approach you are taking with regard to LLF is consistent with holy Scripture?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A At every stage of the LLF process, not least the last 18 months, the Scriptures have been considered carefully, prayerfully, and humbly. In the last several months, theological resources have been provided to the House of Bishops that draw richly on biblical texts - principally passages about marriage, ministry, conscience, and unity. The LLF Working Groups also drew on this material. Future work on doctrine that the House has requested from the Episcopal Reference Group of FAOC will similarly treat of relevant passages and their reception in the Church's history. Such

material does though need to take a considered account of how the same Scriptures may be interpreted very differently; and accordingly their meaning and application to our current debates and decisions is an area of ongoing debate and discernment.

066 Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q43 Is the position of the House of Bishops that we have one doctrine of marriage or two within the Church?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Church's doctrine remains as set out in Canon B 30 (Of Holy Matrimony).

Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q44 What are the legal issues which have led one third of the House of Bishops to state that they are not confident that the PLF as presented are not indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops has received legal advice from the Legal Office in relation to the Prayers of Love and Faith. The substance of that advice has been provided to the General Synod at Annex A of GS 2328. Having considered that advice and relevant theological material, the House of Bishops concluded that the Prayers met the requirement that a form of service be "neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter". If individual members of the House have reached a different conclusion, they are able to express the reasons for their doing so themselves; it would not be right for me to attempt to speak for them.

The Revd Dr Christopher Moore (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q45 Earlier this year, in GS 2346, the following was written with regards to using the Prayers of Love and Faith under Canon B5: "The bishops have listened and take very seriously the concerns around ministers bearing the legal risk of using the PLF. This is why they have been considering alternative routes for authorizing the standalone services that enable the greatest legal protection for those clergy who wish to use them" (p11). Later, on page 13, the risk of using the Prayers of Love and Faith under Canon B5 was summarised as: "High likelihood of legal challenge being brought against individual ministers". Does that remain the position of the House of Bishops? If not, what legal advice have they received to cause them to change their position?

Dr Neil Burgess (York) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q46 In January 2023 the Legal Office was clear in relation to Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) that "In reaching a final view on the legal position the Legal Office will need to see both the final draft of the Prayers and the replacement pastoral guidance" (GS Misc 1339, para 10). We still await the replacement pastoral guidance and, in contrast to the clear statement in the first draft of PLF (GS 2289, p. 22) and despite the promise (in GS 2303) of a legal note "appropriate to the form of final approval, consonant with any relevant provisions in the Pastoral Guidance" there has been no explicit statement from the Legal Office. Noting that GS 2358 Annex C paragraph 1 says definitively that there has been no change in the legal advice: what assurances can the House of Bishops give to parish clergy concerning the legal status of the prayers in (a) regular and (b) standalone services?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission, I will answer questions 45 and 46 together.

As stated in Annex C of GS 2358, “the proposal that the House of Bishops should commend the Prayers of Love and Faith Outline Services (‘standalone services’) for a trial period is put forward following discussions in the LLF working groups. The change in approach which it represents was taken on policy grounds. There has been no change in the legal advice.” The proposed ‘standalone’ services, which are outline orders of service, do not contain any special liturgical texts that are not already in the commended PLF Resource Section. In commending the PLF material the House of Bishops has been clear that it does not consider the prayers in the Resource Section, in themselves, to be contrary to, or indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter. The same goes for the outline orders of service which incorporate prayers from the Resource Section. We trust that the concluded view expressed by the House of Bishops on that question would carry significant weight should any legal challenge be brought against use of the PLF, whether just the Resource Section or the outline services.

Mrs Gill Verschoyle (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q47 Will the House of Bishops make available to Synod in writing the exact legal advice given to them concerning the possible uses of the Prayers of Love and Faith?

Dr Neil Burgess (York) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q48 As part of the ‘reset’ encouraging greater transparency, accountability and trust, and noting that there is no duty by a client of protection of their legal advisers which would normally contain publications, when does the House of Bishops plan to publish the full legal advice they have been given in respect of PLF, rather than expecting members of Synod to accept the bishops’ own summary?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission, I will answer questions 47 and 48 together.

The legal advice provided to the House of Bishops was given over a period of time, sometimes orally, sometimes in writing, often in response to questions as they arose for consideration. There is no single document that contains ‘the legal advice’ and the House has no current plans to publish the various pieces of written advice it has received. However, the substance of the legal advice on which the House of Bishops based its decision to commend the Prayers of Love and Faith Resource Section was set out in GS 2328 at Annex A. The substance of the legal advice given to the House of Bishops on canonical routes for the formal authorisation of Prayers of Love and Faith Outline Services (‘standalone’ services) is set out in Annex A of GS 2346. The substance of the legal advice given to the House of Bishops on the question of clergy being in same-sex civil marriages is set out in Annex B of GS 2346. As those documents make clear, the decisions made and to be made are informed by impartial, expert legal advice provided by the Legal Office of the National Church Institutions; but decisions as to how it wishes to proceed are taken by the House of Bishops collectively and not dictated, or taken on our behalf, by our legal advisers.

Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops

Q49 Please could the Lead Bishop confirm that Annex H of GS2328 (published in November 2023) remains the most complete and up to date statement to date from the House of Bishops which sets out the theological and legal rationale for the current ‘direction of travel’? If not, where can that document be found?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There is a significant amount of theological material that has been developed through the LLF process and ongoing theological work continues as specific questions are identified or raised. Given this, there is not one document that contains all such material. Annex H of GS2328 “explores a theological rationale for the introduction of the *Prayers of Love and Faith*” and “provides an account of what it is the PLF are seeking to do, and not to do.” The basis of the use of the PLF in current proposals remains as outlined there as Annex C of GS2328 indicates. However, as Annex C of GS2328 also identifies additional comment on the theological and legal rationale for the PLF have also been offered in subsequent papers, such as Annex A of GS2346.

The Revd Dr Paul Chamberlain (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops

Q50 Is the House of Bishops still committed to making no change in the doctrine of marriage, as bound by the amended motion in February 2023, included in the theological rationale (Annex H), and pastoral guidance for use of the prayers; or is there a new governing assumption—and if so, on what grounds?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The rationale for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* remains as outlined in Annex H of GS 2328 and in GS 2358.

The Revd Dr Paul Chamberlain (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops

Q51 Has the House of Bishops considered whether there is a canonical basis for the introduction of experimental or trial liturgies in the Church of England other than by the use of Canon B5A? If so to what conclusion did it come; if not, will it now do so?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The proposal in GS 2358 is that the Prayers of Love and Faith outline services be commended by the House of Bishops for use by the minister in his or her discretion under Canon B 5. It would then be for individual ministers to decide whether to use them on what is intended by the House of Bishops to be a trial basis. There will be Pastoral Guidance to inform such use.

Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q52 GS 2328 Annex A, paragraph 17 acknowledges that the bishops have been advised by the Legal Office 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”. Has the House of Bishops therefore considered whether making the PLF available in regular or standalone services fails to implement the February 2023 General Synod motion which stated “That this 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”? What conclusions were reached?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As stated in GS 2328 (Annex A, paragraph 26), and as further explained in the material reproduced in Annex C of GS 2358, the House came to the view that: ‘in so far as making the PLF available for couples in an active sexual relationship does involve any departure from doctrine, it nevertheless does not involve a departure

from doctrine “in any essential matter”, and that doing so is compatible with the relevant canonical requirements.’

The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q53 GS 2358, 38 says, “The likelihood of such [legal] proceedings being brought will likely be considerably lower if all concerned are content with the arrangements for Pastoral Provision outlined in this paper.” What indications have the House of Bishops received from stakeholders opposed to PLF services that they are indeed content with the arrangements for Pastoral Provision outlined in GS2358, or are unlikely to bring legal proceedings?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Conversations with stakeholders who are not in favour of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* have consistently indicated that a period of settled practice around their use will require some form of additional Pastoral Provision or Reassurance, and that with this in place, most of them would be willing to accept that others in the church who may wish to use the PLF could do so.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q54 The House of Bishops has sought to impose restrictions on the use of services under Canon B5. On what canonical or other basis has it purported to act?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The statement of commendation in the [Prayers of Love and Faith Resource Section](#) (at page 3) is as follows: “These prayers are commended by the House of Bishops as being suitable for use by ministers, including, where applicable, in the exercise of their discretion under Canon B 5”.

The Introduction includes the following (at page 4): “Material from the Resource Section should not at present be used to offer special or ‘standalone’ services (hereafter, standalone services)”.

The language “should not” (as opposed to “must not”) is used advisedly. It is guidance from the House of Bishops to the minister as to the use of the Prayers. It is not, and does not purport to be, a legal restriction.

Mr Stephen Hofmeyr (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q55 In what documents have the Legal Office advised the House of Bishops on (i) the legal constraints on any “rite for marking a significant stage in a committed and faithful same-sex relationship” and (ii) whether these legal constraints extend to avoiding any similarity to the Service of Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A In GS 2055 at Annex 1, the House of Bishops was advised that absent any change to the definition of marriage in ecclesiastical law, a form of service which celebrated the relationship between two persons of the same sex would be lawful only if it did not explicitly or implicitly treat or recognise their relationship as equivalent to holy matrimony.

In October 2023, in *Living in Love and Faith – the Current Legal Position*, the House of Bishops received advice which is reflected in Annex A of GS 2328 at paragraph 9:

... we are equally clear that the PLF Resource Section does not treat the relationship of the couple as being Holy Matrimony. They are not being commended for use in a way that does that or gives that impression. The material contained in the PLF Resource Section intentionally does not differentiate between couples who

have and who have not entered into a civil same-sex marriage. ... [the PLF] are not being offered to be used as a thanksgiving for marriage or a service of prayer and dedication after civil marriage and do not refer to, or take account of, a couple's civil marital status.

Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q56 Is it the case that the Legal Office advised the House of Bishops that PLF was "indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England", but that the House, rather than the Legal Office, had to decide whether or not this related to "an essential matter"? What status does such a determination by the House of Bishops have, compared to a determination by the whole of General Synod under Canon B2?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The legal advice given to the House of Bishops and the decisions it took in the light of that advice are set out in GS 2328 at Annex A, paragraphs 16 to 26. We were 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". We accordingly considered legal advice as to how we might approach the question, which was for us to determine, of whether what we were considering would be a departure from doctrine "in any essential matter". For the reasons set out in those paragraphs we decided that it would not. The House is aware that its determination has no specific legal effect, but we trust that it will be accorded significant weight, as the concluded view of the House of Bishops on a matter of doctrine.

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q57 Given that (i) the previous legal advice received by the House of Bishops concerned the experimental use of Prayers of Love and Faith under Canon B 5A with a view to commencing an authorisation process under Canon B2, (ii) Canon B2, it is claimed, makes provision for enabling the Synod to make "small changes in matters which are regarded as doctrinal", (iii) the House accepts that the Church's unchanged doctrine of marriage is as set out in Canon B 30 (which includes the teaching that sexual intimacy be confined exclusively to that relationship), and (iv) the House accepts that PLF 'standalone services' would not be an appropriate use of Canon B 5A, what legal advice has the House received concerning the legality of removing restrictions in the Pastoral Guidance on using PLF material in standalone services as is now proposed for a three-year period of 'discernment' with a view to leading to the possibility of removing the restrictions on clergy entering same-sex civil marriages which may involve sexual intimacy, and under what authorised canonical process if not via the Canon B 5A/B2 route?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The proposal in GS 2358 is that the Prayers of Love and Faith outline services be commended by the House of Bishops for use by the minister in his or her discretion under Canon B 5. It would then be for individual ministers to decide whether to use them on what is intended by the House of Bishops to be a trial basis.

As stated in Annex C of GS 2358, "the proposal that the House of Bishops should commend the Prayers of Love and Faith Outline Services ('standalone services') for a trial period is put forward following discussions in the LLF working groups. The change in approach which it represents was taken on policy grounds. There has been no change in the legal advice."

The Revd Mike Tufnell (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q58 Following GS 2289, how, by whom and when was it concluded that the difference of sex was not an 'essential matter' in our current doctrine of Marriage, whilst other elements were 'essential'? What theological and legal work informed that decision and how was this discussed and voted upon in the House of Bishops?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The theological and legal basis upon which the House of Bishops concluded that the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith Resource Section would not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter is set out in detail in Annex A of GS 2328 at paragraphs 16 to 26.

Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark) to ask the House of Bishops:

Q59 What effect did the Cornes amendment have on the decisions made by the House of Bishops in October 2023?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A At its meeting in October 2023 the House of Bishops was reminded of the full motion passed by the General Synod in February 2023.

The motions passed by the House of Bishops in October 2023 were set out in my answer to Q56 from Mr Neill Burgess in February 2024 available at p25 of the Questions Notice paper.

The Revd Dr Christopher Moore (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q60 The press release following the House of Bishops' meeting on 12th June 2024 stated: "Following a wide-ranging debate, the House of Bishops voted clearly in favour of the proposals being explored further and discussed by Synod which meets in York next month." How many of the House voted in favour or the proposals being explored further and discussed by Synod, how many voted against, and how many abstained?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The College of Bishops, together with members of the LLF working groups, met on the morning of 12 June to hear about and discuss the work being done to implement the General Synod's motions on LLF.

In the afternoon, the House of Bishops debated the proposals further in light of this discussion. They considered the proposals to be brought to the General Synod. There were 22 votes in favour, 7 against and 4 abstentions.

Mrs Catherine Butcher (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q61 Bishop Martyn Snow has written about the importance of unity in relation to the processes and debates on sexuality. How has this concern for the importance of unity shaped the discussions and decisions of the House of Bishops – for example, in limiting statements and actions which might prove difficult and divisive?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Seeking unity and promoting reconciliation remains central to all ongoing discussions around LLF. This has been reflected in our conversations in the House and in wider communications by bishops. There are no restrictions on bishops making public statements on matters they consider to be important.

The Revd Jonathan Macy (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q62 There are two churches served by one stipend. They are in vacancy. One church demands a clergy person who must do PLF, and one church demands a clergy

person who must not do PLF. How is the parish profile written, how is the conflict resolved, and what provision will be given to the church who will have a clergy person whose ministry goes directly against what they want and need?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A I can't give a specific answer to this scenario as there are a range of potential ways forward that could be found. The Pastoral Guidance for the *Prayers of Love and Faith* does offer advice on handling such disagreements well in local contexts, through grace and respect, seeking to avoid language such as 'demanding' alignment to one position or another. Further work to develop the proposal outlined in GS 2358 will include consultations that enhance the guidance and inform practical support in dioceses.

The Ven Adrian Youings (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q63 In preparing for this Synod, did the House of Bishops consider the potential pastoral impact on same sex couples of permitting stand-alone services for a three-year trial with the real possibility that Synod may not approve the permanent move at the end of that period? Did they consider the pastoral implications on couples who could be refused permission (or on clergy who would have to refuse permission) after the trial period is ended? If so, what were the conclusions reached by the House of Bishops?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A This type of scenario has been considered in developing the approach to widening the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in the outline proposal. None of the approaches open could fully protect against such a situation. Engagement with stakeholders who would like to use the Prayers in standalone services is consistent that this situation is not considered as a barrier to wider use. The proposed period of discernment is intended to provide maximum opportunity for those who wish to use the Prayers to do so, alongside the introduction of Pastoral Provision to support this use and reassure those who do not hold to their introduction. It aims at finding a period of settled practice during which time data on their use, and feedback from those who use them, could be gathered. At the end of this period, better consideration can be given to any wider doctrinal and liturgical questions this feedback might raise, and to the best ways to formally address these.

Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q64 In the course of the work, undertaken by the LLF Working Groups and both the House and College of Bishops, that resulted in the proposal within GS 2358 to make provision for pastoral reassurance via delegated episcopal ministry, what learning was drawn from the experience of extended episcopal oversight provided for those who do not accept the ministry of women.?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Current provision under the House of Bishops Declaration has been referenced in various discussions. A difficulty in drawing on learning is that there are differing views on the impact and experience in this area – some positive and some less than positive. These conversations have though been highly influential in the values set out for the Pastoral Provision (GS2358 para 24). These include: symmetry – that arrangements for pastoral provision must be available (even if not identical) for those who want developments put in place and those who don't, national consistency, where a code of practice to enable the outcomes sought can be balanced with regional implementation to manage this well and strengthen relationships.

Similarly, the terms of reference for the Interim Independent Review Panel have been drafted to provide reassurance that a range of theological convictions in relation to such matters will be appropriately respected and that those holding different positions are treated fairly (see GS 2358 Annex B).

Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q65 A YouGov survey in August 2023 found that 2% of the population identified as being polyamorous, and a further 10% said they were "open to it". Will the House of Bishops consider offering prayers of blessing to people in polyamorous relationships, and if not, for what reasons based in Scripture or the Church of England's doctrine of marriage?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops has no plans to offer prayers of blessing to people in polyamorous relationships. Annex A to GS 2328 indicates in paragraph 14.iv that the PLF may be offered to same sex couples on the basis of the 'family resemblance' of the goods in such relationships to the goods of marriage (explored in more detail in Annex H to GS 2328). Central to these goods is exclusive, lifelong, faithful commitment, one to another. Ministers are encouraged to discern for themselves how to provide pastoral care and prayer for all people who come to them, no matter what their relationship status and home circumstances.

The Revd Mark Miller (Durham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q66 Given that the majority of "Issues in Human Sexuality" is a theological rationale to support what follows, can the House of Bishops provide the theological rationale supporting any changes in pastoral guidance (or Interim Ministry Guidance) as proposed in the new motion, given the significant revisions needed if standalone services are commended rather than authorised?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The outline proposal in GS 2358 suggests that parts 1 and 2 of the Pastoral Guidance currently in place be amended for wider use of the *Prayers of Love and Faith* in services that are not regularly scheduled. The theological rationale for the PLF is unchanged. The Guidance currently includes points relating to use of the Prayers in 'Standalone Services' that would be updated to reflect how a registration system might be brought into place, and the operation of any Pastoral Provision introduced to accompany this. As outlined in the proposal such detail would be brought back to the General Synod in February 2025.

The House of Bishops has commissioned work under the auspices of the Faith and Order Commission around the nature of doctrine, particularly as it relates to the doctrine of marriage and the question of clergy in same sex civil marriages. This will inform the House of Bishops in taking any further decisions on Interim Ministry Guidance.

The Revd Mike Tufnell (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q67 Has the House considered how a priest, who has entered into a SSM, could read The Preface to the Marriage Service and at the same time not be seen to be leading a lifestyle (at the very least) indicative of a departure from our doctrine of Marriage and the difference of sex expressed as essential within our Marriage Service liturgy? If so, what did they conclude and did they discuss how that liturgy might be changed without expressing a departure from the doctrine that underpins it?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A I am not aware of discussions on this particular question. The House has though received and discussed theological reflection material on general questions on clergy and same-sex marriage and on distinctions between same-sex marriage, civil marriage and Holy Matrimony. Further work has now been commissioned around the nature of doctrine, particularly as it relates to the doctrine of marriage and the question of clergy in same sex civil marriages, with the aim of reporting back to the General Synod on this work in February 2025.

Mr Robin Hall (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q68 With a decision about clergy in same sex marriage not envisaged until February 2025, what advice is offered to those clergy in Europe where, in some jurisdictions, they must choose between their PTO or the next of kin and legal rights only available through civil marriage to their same sex partner?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Until such time as a decision is made around the removal (or not) of restrictions on clergy entering into same sex marriage, there is no further advice to offer on this. I recognise that there are some places where this impacts clergy more sharply and, once established, the Pastoral Consultative Group will consider how best we can support clergy in these difficult situations.

The Revd Dr Charlie Bell (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q69 Given the prominence given to the apology to LGBTQIA+ people in part (a) of the LLF Synod motion of February 2023 and in the accompanying media, what concrete and specific steps are being, have been, and are planned to be taken to monitor the impact of this apology on national and diocesan church policy and its implementation, and its national institutions and decision making bodies, including this Synod?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The apology offered in February 2023 underscores an ongoing commitment to affirm, publicly and unequivocally, that LGBTQI+ people are welcome and valued: we are all children of God (GS 2289).

I am not aware of plans to formally monitor impact in this area at this time. I would welcome further conversations on how the proposal and supporting work in GS2358 might contribute in some way to this.

Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q70 When will members of General Synod see the first draft of the document that will replace Issues in Human Sexuality?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The replacement of Issues in Human Sexuality is not envisaged to be in one document. The proposal in GS 2358 indicates that Pastoral Guidance (including Interim Ministry Guidance), a Bishop's Statement and Code of Practice for pastoral provision will replace Issues in Human Sexuality. Progress on this will be reported to General Synod in February 2025.

This work will be informed by further theological work carried out under the auspices of the Faith and Order Commission around the nature of doctrine, particularly as it relates to the doctrine of marriage and the question of clergy in same sex civil marriages.

The Revd Neil Barber (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q71 At the last Synod, in the debate about LLF, Ed Shaw proposed an amendment: 'After "bridge-building" insert "and acknowledge that for many in the Church of England, including members of General Synod, some of the issues raised are not matters on which they can simply agree to disagree"' which was rejected by the House of Bishops by 20 votes to 2. Could the House clarify whether members who voted against: (a) Do not believe that there are members of this Synod who think these are matters on which we cannot simply agree to disagree; or (b) Do not wish to acknowledge their existence; or (c) Do not think acknowledging them matters?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As you know, there are a diversity of views held within the House of Bishops. As such, I would not want to presume to speak for my fellow episcopal sisters and brothers as to why they might have voted a certain way. However, what I can do is share with you my own views on this: while I appreciate the depth of the disagreement over LLF, I want to retain the hope of reconciliation. As the LLF process has continued since February, I think we have become more realistic about the fact that, for some, these questions are of primary importance, and we are seeking to come to a settlement that both honours that while enabling as many as possible to remain within the Church of England.

Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q72 What steps have been taken by the House of Bishops and others to seek the wider Anglican Communion's views during the discussions about Living in Love and Faith (LLF), the Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) and the development of the current proposals?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Following his appointment the Archbishop's Adviser on Anglican Communion Affairs formally wrote to the Primates of the Anglican Communion to seek their views on Living in Love and Faith. These conversations are ongoing and discussions on questions of human identity and sexuality continue to happen within Communion bodies such as the Anglican Consultative Council, Primates Meeting and within the various committees. The recent work of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order on *Good Differentiation* has been helpful in developing aspects of the proposal.

In addition, the LLF Next Steps Group commissioned a report on 'The impact on Churches of decision-making regarding questions of sexuality and marriage' which is available on the LLF Hub.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMISSION

Mrs Julie Withers (Chester) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:

Q73 What is the proportion of CDMs taken out against senior male clergy and senior women clergy in each of the last three years?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:

A The Clergy Discipline Commission collects data by way of an annual return from each diocese and the provinces of Canterbury and York. This is published in the annual report which is presented to Synod via the House of Bishops - see GS Misc 1386 for this year's report.

The data collected does not distinguish between allegations of misconduct brought against male and female clergy. The only distinction as to seniority is in respect of clergy in episcopal orders.

The total number of allegations of misconduct made against bishops and archbishops for the previous three years is as follows:

2023

Allegations against an archbishop - 1

Allegations against a bishop - 7

2022

Allegations against an archbishop - 3

Allegations against a bishop - 18

2021

Allegations against an archbishop - 3

Allegations against a bishop - 19

DIOCESSES COMMISSION

Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Dioceses Commission:

Q74 In the light of the report on Diocesan Finances (GS Misc 1384), what consideration has the Dioceses Commission given to potential future diocesan amalgamations?

Dame Caroline Spelman to reply as Chair of the Dioceses Commission:

A The Commission consulted widely at the end of 2022 through the second phase of the 'Bishops and their ministries' consultation. The findings of this showed that, for the majority, there was little appetite for diocesan combinations. The Commission therefore decided that there would not be a large-scale, centrally-led approach to combine dioceses. There are no current plans for any diocesan combinations. However, the Commission said at the time and maintains that it stands ready to assist and is open to conversations and exploring with bishops and senior leaders in potential cases where it is felt that combining dioceses could enable greater missional effectiveness and sustainability.

The Commission is working with Carl Hughes and his team as they continue the work on diocesan finances. Together they are particularly looking at how to encourage and facilitate more collaboration and sharing of services between dioceses and between dioceses and the NCIs.

FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION

Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:

Q75 In Feb 2023, a supplementary question to Q87 suggested that FAOC take legal advice on the meaning of "any essential matter". Exactly what progress has FAOC made in taking such legal advice with a view to providing a working definition of "in any essential matter" ?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe] to reply as Chair of [the Faith and Order Commission:

A The supplementary to question 87 in February 2024 asked whether it might be necessary for the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) to obtain legal advice as to the exact import of the words 'in any essential matter' as they are applied to the doctrinal content of liturgies commended or authorised for use in the Church of England. The legal office did supply advice on this question in Annex A to GS2328, paras 18-26. While FAOC may provide theological advice to the House of Bishops, legal advice is supplied separately by the legal office. FAOC and the legal office

offer advice which the House of Bishops may draw upon in making its own decisions. FAOC has not so far been asked formally to advise on how to assess whether a given liturgy impinges upon the doctrine of the Church of England in an 'essential matter', though the doctrinal work that FAOC has lately been asked to undertake (as intimated in GS2358) is likely to include comment relevant to that issue.

The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q76 GS2358, 41 describes theological exploration: "Is it possible to hold multiple doctrines simultaneously, responding graciously and pastorally, even if this is messy or incoherent. Can there be a range of interpretations of one doctrine?" Will this exploration specifically address sharp doctrinal disagreements about which lifestyles Scripture and the ancient Fathers teach exclude [people] from the kingdom of God (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:18-21, Rev. 21:8) and which require breaking fellowship (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:9-13) or should not be tolerated (e.g., Rev. 2:20-23)? If not, can it please do so, given their relevance to our current disagreements?

The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe to reply as Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:

A Whenever the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) undertakes theological work, it aims to treat first and foremost all relevant Scriptures, as well as attending to the tradition of the Church, insights from reasoned reflection on Scripture, and the experience of God's people in their discipleship and worship. As such, relevant New Testament passages and patristic reflection thereon will inform the work being undertaken; though it is not known at this stage how the document will be framed and structured.

LITURGICAL COMMISSION

The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q77 What is the process for deciding which secular calendar days warrant the publication of new prayers? Specifically, who decides which days will be marked, by whom are the prayers drafted, and how are they assessed for theological and pastoral integrity?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The Liturgical Commission undertakes formal work at the invitation of the House of Bishops. It also responds to more informal requests to draft prayers from the national Communications team and from elsewhere in the NCIs and the wider Church of England, normally in relation to significant events. Though it is not always the source of prayers for secular occasions (nor should it be), the Commission welcomes such invitations to provide informal resources for prayer and worship.

The Revd Dr Sara Batts-Neale (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q78 What is the Liturgical Commission's current thinking regarding possible revision of the Common Worship Calendar?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The Commission keeps a file of names forwarded to it for possible inclusion in the *Common Worship* Calendar. It is considering the scope and the means by which a revision of the Calendar might be carried out in the next synodical quinquennium.

The Commission is mindful that many would wish to remember in worship and prayer the lives of Christians who have died relatively recently and so would not qualify for inclusion in such a revision. Within the next year, it plans to issue

guidance on how to create, use, and renew diocesan calendars (permitted under Canon B 6) and on how to create 'local provision... to supplement the national Calendar', as suggested in the CW 'Rules to Order the Christian Year'. If a holy person were widely to be celebrated by dioceses and local churches, that would be very fitting evidence of the eventual possibility of their inclusion in the general CW calendar.

The Revd Martin Davy (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q79 What liturgies have been subject to an experimental process within the Church of England (a) through authorisation under Canon B5A and (b) by some other means?

Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q80 In relation to those experimental liturgies that have been permitted within the Church of England - how long was each experiment, how many of these liturgies were then considered in some form under Canon B2, and what were the voting figures on the texts at Final Approval?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A With permission, I will answer questions 79 and 80 together.

GS Misc 1359 gives an account of the history of the experimental field-testing of liturgical material before *Common Worship*. The following *Common Worship* services were temporarily authorized for experimental use before consideration by the General Synod under Canon B 2. The figures indicate the duration of the trial and voting at Final Approval.

Funeral Services (1999) (trialled for 3 months)			
For	Bishops 29	Clergy 162	Laity 161
Against	Bishops 0	Clergy 0	Laity 0
Marriage Services (2000) (trialled for 3 months)			
For	Bishops 21	Clergy 120	Laity 131
Against	Bishops 0	Clergy 0	Laity 0
Holy Communion with Eucharistic Prayers (2000) (trialled briefly 1997-8)			
For	Bishops 31	Clergy 175	Laity 164
Against	Bishops 0	Clergy 1	Laity 17
Weekday Lectionary (2005) (trialled 2003-4)			
For	Bishops 20	Clergy 71	Laity 107
Against	Bishops 0	Clergy 2	Laity 5
Additional Eucharistic Prayers (2012) (trialled for 6 months)			
For	Bishops 26	Clergy 110	Laity 95
Against	Bishops 0	Clergy 0	Laity 5
Alternative Baptism Texts in Accessible Language (2015) (trialled for 5 months)			
For	Bishops 23	Clergy 114	Laity 126
Against	Bishops 1	Clergy 6	Laity 10

Mr Andrew Farley (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q81 Given the first two of the Liturgical Commission's four primary functions are "To prepare forms of service at the request of the House of Bishops and for its consideration" and "To advise on the experimental use of forms of service and the development of liturgy", what role has the Commission (as a whole) played in relation to Prayers of Love and Faith since the start of the House of Bishops' discernment process in September 2022?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A The Liturgical Commission as a whole has been briefed on developments in relation to *Prayers of Love and Faith* at each of its meetings since May 2023. It issued a briefing paper on 'The Recent Evolution of the Church of England's Liturgical

Procedures and Canons' as GS Misc 1359. The Commission has recently considered some proposals for gathering feedback on the *PLF* and monitoring their use.

Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

Q82 Since November 2022 has the Commission or the National Worship and Liturgy Adviser received advice from the Legal Office and if so when and under what title?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply as Chair of the Liturgical Commission:

A Neither the Liturgical Commission nor the National Liturgical Adviser has received advice from the Legal Office since November 2022.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q83 What is the role of Archbishop of Canterbury as a member of the Trustees of the Church Commissioners, and what role does he play in the appointment of the First Church Estates Commissioner?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A Both Archbishops are Church Commissioners *ex officio* and, as such, are trustees of the Church Commissioners and members of the Board of Governors. The Archbishop of Canterbury is Chair *ex officio*.

Given the many other roles they fulfil, successive Archbishops of Canterbury have delegated their chairmanship of the Church Commissioners, for many years to an Acting Chair elected annually by the Board and nowadays for periods of up to five years to a Deputy Chair, in accordance with section 5(2)(a) of the Church Commissioners Measure 1947. In my time as Archbishop I have exercised this power to delegate to a deputy, currently the Bishop of Salisbury.

The appointment of the First Church Estates Commissioner is made by the Crown. The recruitment of the current First Church Estates Commissioner was overseen by a panel of which I was not a member although the Archbishop of York and I did meet the final two candidates to emerge from an extremely thorough search process. We were both enthusiastically supportive of the recommendation to Her late Majesty the Queen, that Alan Smith be appointed.

Dr Paul Buckingham (Peterborough) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q84 What action will be taken by the Church Commissioners to ensure that the facts relating to the profits made from slavery in the Church of England's investment in the South Sea Company have been objectively established, and that the 'Church Commissioners' Research into Historic Links to Transatlantic Chattel Slavery' has been adequately peer-reviewed?

Mr Richard Brown (Chelmsford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q85 Research by Professor Richard Dale has shown that the claim of the report of the Church Commissioners that Queen Anne's Bounty profited from the slave trade through investments in the South Sea Company was mistaken. What action has been done either to correct that record, or engage with the historical evidence of Professor Dale to challenge his argument?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A With permission, I will answer Dr Buckingham and Mr Brown together.

In 2019, following questions raised by its Audit & Risk Committee, the Church Commissioners initiated a research project to determine if there were links between

Queen Anne's Bounty, one of its predecessor funds, and African chattel enslavement. This research, which took place over several years, involved a forensic accounting process by Grant Thornton and expert input from academics Dr Helen Paul of Southampton University and Professor Arthur Burns (1963 – 2023), with their conclusions found in our [published research report](#). Since then, historians Professor Richard Drayton of King's College, London, and Dr Christienna Fryar have also been engaged in our work. These four academics are amongst the foremost specialists in this specific area of research.

We stand by the thorough research which revealed how Queen Anne's Bounty was invested in, and received a significant share of its income from, the South Sea Company, a company that was formed as an integral part of the early modern British state and was designed from the outset as a slaving company. Queen Anne's Bounty also received benefactions from individuals who are likely to have profited from enslavement.

As a responsible investor of the Church's endowment fund, the fact that the Commissioners' predecessor fund had any financial involvement in this vile practice is a source of deep shame. We will hold ourselves accountable for our own past investments and will respond in faith to what we have learnt, in the hope that our response may help to bring healing, repair and justice and be a demonstration of Christian values and the gospel being lived out.

A recent [article](#) in the Church Times (and available on the Church of England [website](#)) by Gareth Mostyn, Secretary to the Church Commissioners, deals with these matters in more detail.

Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q86 In the context of the doubt and uncertainty, reflected by views being expressed in the media by senior historians and journalists, about the reliability of research conducted by and on behalf of the Church Commissioners (the "CCs") into whether or not one of their antecedent funds invested in and profited from the slave trade:

- (1) will the CCs initiate an independent review to check that there is a sound historical basis for their decision to create an "impact investment fund" as a form of reparation?
- (2) could the CCs please set out, by reasoned reference to statute, decided legal authority, their charitable objectives and their fiduciary duties, complete details of the legal basis upon which the CCs are empowered to allocate £100 million to the proposed reparations project from their General and/or other fund(s) from which this sum is to be sourced?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A I refer to my earlier answer to Dr Paul Buckingham, Question 84.

We stand by the thorough research which took place over a number of years and has involved forensic accountants and a number of expert academics. The research revealed how Queen Anne's Bounty was invested in, and received a significant share of its income from, the South Sea Company, a company that was formed as an integral part of the early modern British state and was designed from the outset as a slaving company. Queen Anne's Bounty also received benefactions from individuals who are likely to have profited from enslavement, such as Edward Colston.

As a responsible investor of an in-perpetuity endowment fund with its purpose to support the work and ministry of the Church of England, the fact that the Church

Commissioners' predecessor fund had any financial involvement in this vile practice is a source of deep shame.

We will hold ourselves accountable for our own past investments and will respond in faith to what we have learnt. In addressing these links, we have a chance to make a real difference to the lives of communities that are still today experiencing the legacy of this horrifying cruelty. We believe that by addressing our past transparently, the Church and its teachings will be more relevant to more people. We see our response as an important missional activity that will support the work and ministry of the Church of England in England.

The Church Commissioners will ensure that any activity is consistent with its powers and trustees' legal obligations and to that end we are in discussion with regulators about such authorisations as may be required.

Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q87 The Oversight Group report for the Church Commissioners used the term 'reparations' to describe its work 12 times, and the term was also used frequently at the press conference announcing the report. However, on 21st March 2024, the Archbishop of Canterbury told Times Radio that to say that the Project Spire fund aimed to make reparations for slavery was "nonsense". Which of these views is correct?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A Reparations is a highly complex concept which means very different things to different people, and indeed to different organisations. For example, the CARICOM Reparations Committee and the UN have different interpretations. Activists and legal specialists have spent decades exploring different reparatory models, which typically involve a multi-faceted approach - the word is used in this sense by Oversight Group members. However, many (including the press) typically interpret reparations solely as compensation to individuals. In their report, the Oversight Group say, "*we prefer 'repair' to 'reparations' to distinguish the fund from initiatives for direct compensation for descendants of enslaved Africans.*"

Our response is not about paying compensation to individuals, nor is it purely about the money. We want to be clear that no amount of money will ever be enough to repair the horrors of the past. That is why, through this fund, we are seeking to invest for a better and fairer future for all, in particular for communities affected by historic African chattel enslavement.

The Church Commissioners themselves are not experts on reparatory justice, and do not seek to judge their own actions. Once we have implemented our response, we hope it will be possible for others, who are experts on reparatory justice, to evaluate whether or not this can serve as a reparatory act.

Please also refer to the Archbishop of Canterbury's article for the Church of England Newspaper, on his website [here](#).

Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q88 Considering the backlash against the Commissioners' £100 million slavery reparations fund, what allowances are planned to compensate diocese and parishes where parishioners have as a result of the fund withdrawn or reduced their giving?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A Our funding commitment will be sourced in its entirety from the Endowment Fund managed by the Church Commissioners. None of the money given to a parish

church will be used for this fund. None of the money will come from parish income. And of course, every gift made to a Parish, whether directly or through the Parish Giving Scheme, will go to the intended beneficiary, now and always.

We do not have any data about a material loss in giving due to the Church Commissioners' work to address links to African chattel enslavement, although we have heard anecdotally that some givers may have chosen to withdraw their support.

We have, however, worked closely with Giving Advisors to product a Myth-Buster resource which outlines key facts about our response, and counters some of the misleading impressions given by some media coverage and others online.

In addressing these links, we have a chance to make a real difference to the lives of communities that are still today experiencing the legacy of this horrifying cruelty. We believe that by addressing our past transparently, the Church and its teachings will be more relevant to more people. We are aware that a failure to address this history deters people from communities impacted by the legacy of African chattel enslavement from attending and supporting our churches. We see our response as an important missional activity that will support the work and ministry of the Church of England in England.

Mr Andrew Smith (Rochester) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q89 It has been claimed on a number of occasions that the Project Spire fund will not be making grants, but the language of making grants has appeared in presentations about the fund and in the annual report of the Commissioners. Will the fund be making grants?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A We do not recognise the suggestion of claims that the fund will not be making grants. Grant-making was announced as part of our response when, in January 2023, we published our research. At that time, the Church Commissioners announced it was committing £100 million of funding over three triennia to a programme comprising a new impact investment fund, a programme of grant funding and further research. This remains the intent.

This announcement was made via a global press release, with resulting articles appearing on the front page of four national newspapers. This information has also featured on our website since January 2023 (which includes responses to a number of [frequently asked questions](#)). The original press release can be found [here](#).

Dr Paul Buckingham (Peterborough) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q90 Please provide Synod with a list of the specific questions that the Commissioners (and staff working on their behalf) have asked of the Charity Commission, and the responses provided to date, in relation to the grants element of the Commissioners response to transatlantic slavery?

The Bishop of Salisbury to reply as Deputy Chair of the Church Commissioners:

A The Church Commissioners recognises that its proposed response to its research into African chattel enslavement, known as Project Spire, must of course be legally sound and that trustees must comply with their legal obligations. The Board has authorised the Secretary and senior officers to liaise with the Charity Commission. The Church Commissioners recognise that they may require specific authorisation to apply their funds for the purposes of their response to Project Spire. The Commissioners have provided the Charity Commission with background material and have engaged in constructive dialogue about the type of authorisation which

they may seek and have asked the Charity Commission for any view as to what information they might best provide in support of such an application.

Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q91 A report on the effects of global warming in the Lancet 2022, showed that, since 2000, globally 650 000 more people survived the cold than those who died from rising sea levels and extreme climatic events. What consideration has been given by the Church Commissioners to whether it remains wise to continue to spend £190 m over the next ten years on a net zero policy in the light of those figures and the saving or loss in human lives?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A It is right that the Church of England stands by its commitments on climate change. The Lancet paper quoted goes on to say that extreme temperatures, both hot and cold, have a substantial impact on mortality which varies in both space and time around the globe and that the findings of the study will help communities in developing strategies to reduce weather-related impacts immediately and in response to climate change.

Loss of life due to climate change is not only caused by temperature. The retreat of the polar ice caps is well-evidenced, and we are already seeing the impacts of sea level rise on coastal and island communities around the world. More frequent and extreme weather events and changing weather patterns are having an impact on public health, food security, and causing damage to infrastructure, for example, and the impacts are not distributed equally. We should note the concerns of Anglicans around the world who are already being impacted by climate change and biodiversity loss, and their appreciation of our work in this area.

Finally, many of the things we are doing to cut emissions also help people who are vulnerable to cold – e.g. better heated churches in winter and better insulated homes with more efficient heating. We are spending money specifically on such measures in our vicarages and clergy retirement houses to support our active clergy and those who have given long service to the Church.

Miss Emily Hill (Hereford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q92 What is the National Church doing to celebrate and advertise its achievements towards Net Zero, in order to be more active role models for Environmental change and to send “missional messages”?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Net Zero Carbon Programme Board approved a Communications and Engagement Strategy in January 2024, and this outlines how the national Church will engage, equip and inspire our parishes, schools and those responsible for our buildings to take action to reach net zero carbon. The strategy is based on telling and sharing compelling stories to illustrate what it means to be stewards of God’s creation and how a church community can work towards net zero carbon.

A comprehensive Communications Toolkit was launched in April 2024 to support dioceses their local communications and to reach out to parishes and schools. Feedback from dioceses has been very encouraging, with one communications director saying it will ‘mark a sea change in their comms on these issues.’

A new video was launched in March to celebrate what churches, cathedrals and schools are already doing and to inspire others to get started - so far it has had over 2.2K views on YouTube. In the next couple of months, we will be producing our first

Net Zero Impact Report which looks back on the last year, highlights key achievements and case studies, and celebrates the people behind the net zero carbon projects which are up and running around the country.

The Revd Dan Leathers (Liverpool) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q93 With a year having passed since the General Synod called the national church institutions to commit an estimated £210 million of expenditure to improve the carbon footprint of vicarages nationally, what progress has been made on this specific commitment?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A One year ago, Synod called on all of the Church of England (not just the NCIs) to commit expenditure, reflective of the £10 million committed by Oxford Diocese, on environmental works to improve the carbon footprint of vicarages. This expenditure needs to be reflective of the work that is needed, and the Net Zero Carbon Programme has commissioned surveys of some 100 clergy properties to gain a better understanding of what is required to make affordable and proportionate reductions in the emissions from our housing portfolio.

In response to General Synod setting the ambition for the Church of England to become net zero by 2030, the Church Commissioners have committed £190 million of funding over the period 2023 to 2031. This is to encourage the decarbonisation of the entire property portfolio in our care (some 32,200 buildings), which of course includes vicarages.

With regard specifically to vicarages, the Net Zero Carbon Programme has committed £2.45 million in this Triennium (2023-2025) to support net zero housing demonstrators and has already allocated just over £2.3 million of that funding to support decarbonisation projects on circa 52 clergy properties across 39 dioceses and the Pensions Board.

The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q94 In response to question 180 in February which concerned Diocesan progress towards Net Zero, I was told that a progress update on milestone 4.1.4 was being collected and would inform a first Annual Progress Report for the programme. When and where will this information be published?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A To date approximately half of the dioceses have submitted monitoring reports on the progress achieved for 2023 and of these 100% have secured Diocesan Synod approval for their Net Zero Action Plans in line with milestone 4.1.4.

All except one diocese have secured core capacity building funding to increase capacity for progressing their net zero action plans and, of 59 roles being supported through the programme 35 are now in post. However, some dioceses have had difficulties recruiting due both to the relatively new and specialist nature of the net zero sector and to most of the roles on offer being fixed term or part time.

Later this month, the Net Zero Programme Board will be receiving the Programme's first Annual Impact Report, and this will include a high level summary of progress against the key milestones in the Routemap. The report will be published thereafter.

Dr Simon Eyre (Chichester) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q95 How many redundant church sites, where the church remains standing or has already been demolished, are currently awaiting sale or development, what is the average time interval between a church closing and the site being sold or developed

and on how many of these sites have the Church Commissioners directly invested resources to develop the site for social benefit to provide community facilities or affordable housing?

The Revd Canon Dr Flora Winfield to reply as Third Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 sets out a framework through which the Commissioners may approve a suitable onward use for church buildings which have been closed for public worship. The Measure does not give the Commissioners powers to act as a developer, and they are only able to use the funds from the proceeds of disposal for standing buildings or demolition. The Commissioners are not allowed to fund re-development from proceeds.

There are currently 127 cases where a new use is being found for a church building which has been closed and there are 6 cases of demolition within that total. There are only 2 cleared sites awaiting disposal. There are positive examples of development which have been achieved; for example Bestwood St Matthew (Southwell & Nottingham) where 15 units of supported accommodation and communal facilities will be built on the site.

For regular cases, the average time between closure and disposal is approximately 3-5 years, but for more complex cases it can sometimes take considerably longer. There are 53 long standing cases, and a potential use has been identified for 43 of those cases.

Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q96 What has been the impact of the helpful Church Commissioners for England 'In Conversation' series of agricultural case studies and what other measures are being taken to encourage sharing of good practice among farm tenants?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Over recent years, we have strived to build trusting and collaborative relationships with farming tenants.

The "In Conversation" series of interviews showcased some of the most progressive and forward-thinking tenants. The impact has been incredibly positive as it created a platform for us to demonstrate how, through collaboration, we can create and develop a thriving tenanted sector.

In addition to this series, we regularly meet with tenants individually, and as part of cluster groups, to share ideas and best practice. This is supported by a portfolio-wide survey that helps identify areas of focus and potential for collaboration. Over two thirds (68%) of our farming tenants are collaborating with other business on sustainable practices.

Our 'Year in Review' report covers several examples in more detail. These include work that supports cluster groups as well as identifying environmental improvements through our Farm Letting Environmental Assessment work.

The Commissioners' team has hosted a series of workshops and farm walks to bring together tenants, as well as groups including the RSPB and the Nature Friendly Farming Network. In addition, we invited tenants to the Groundswell Regenerative Agricultural Festival, and organised more informal meetings to bring tenants together, such as a 'pie and a pint' event in Carlisle!

Mrs Valerie Hallard (Carlisle) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q97 What proportion of Church Commissioners' agricultural tenants have completed a farm carbon audit, and what are the Commissioners doing to incentivise this work?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Based on the results to date of an ongoing Farmland survey covering over 32,500 acres of Commissioners' farmland (65% of our equipped farms) and over 70 tenants, 42% of tenants have carried out a carbon audit while 50% have undertaken a biodiversity survey or nature-based audit. Of those who have now carried out multiple audits, 57% have seen a reduction in emissions),

We see such audits as increasingly important for assisting farmers in understanding their environmental impact and opportunities for improvement, and such data is increasingly being called for within supply chains and retailer contracts.

Given the number of different carbon audit toolkits on the market, we work to help tenants identify the most suitable auditing tool for their farming system.

Our portfolio-wide farm tenant survey has helped us to understand better the key barriers to undertaking carbon audits and other environmental assessments. To incentivise this work further, we ensure that every new long-term letting undertakes a carbon audit at its commencement, and that Farm Letting Environmental Assessments are carried out across all new tenancies in partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).

Canon Robert Perry (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q98 How much of the Church Commissioners' agricultural land is type 3b or 4 and what percentage of this land would the Commissioners consider prioritising for nature restoration as and when any existing tenancies terminate?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Approximately 90% of our agricultural land is grade 1-3 (productive to highly productive). 49% is grade 3, while only 6% is grade 4 and 5. Assessments of Agricultural Land Classification do not divide into subgrades 3a and 3b. Given the scale of our land ownership we have not undertaken an assessment on the ground for every farm.

When a tenancy ends or is renewed, we use this opportunity to consider nature restoration. This includes undertaking a Farm Letting Environmental Assessment in partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). These identify the best areas for habitat creation and nature-based improvements.

In addition, specific nature conservation projects are developed across the country. Examples include the creation of Bartonsham Meadows Nature Reserve in Herefordshire and a butterfly conservation project at Magdalen Down on our Winchester Estate.

The majority of our land is productive farmland (grade 1-3); therefore we are focused on food production utilising the principles of regenerative farming and incorporating nature into farming systems. This is also a priority for our farming tenants with 90% actively improving biodiversity within their farms.

The Revd Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask Church Commissioners:

Q99 A recent Guardian article highlighted the potential for grazing sheep under solar panels. Would the Church Commissioners encourage this on their land, and would tenancy agreements need to change to allow it?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Yes. We support the ability to incorporate livestock within any renewable energy project, including solar arrays. This would be subject to working with the solar farm operator and potential livestock tenant. We also encourage land sharing within a

farmed environment, particularly integrating livestock into an arable system to assist with the principles of regenerative farming and this can include allowing sheep grazing within a cropped system. This may be subject to lease variations depending on the individual circumstances.

The Commissioners actively look to explore new innovations and processes, including how appropriately to introduce renewable energy schemes on our land. We are supportive of implementing products or innovations that are viable.

The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q100 It's good to see the updated Church Commissioners for England Responsible and Ethical Investment policy with new restrictions including fossil fuel investment. What scope is there for actively choosing to invest more in companies which promote respect for people and planet such as climate solutions?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A As of December 2022, the Commissioners' portfolio invested more than £800 million in climate and environmental solutions. This £800 million includes sustainable forestry, funds investing in climate infrastructure and green buildings, and shares in large listed-companies that help decarbonise the economy which we hold through non-climate-specialised funds.

In addition to this, we invest in funds which don't formally meet the threshold for climate solutions but are focused on opportunities in the energy transition, and also in funds which aim to set science-based targets for the companies in the fund.

As well as direct investment or investment in specific funds, we also invest in and enable initiatives in other parts of the portfolio. For example, we work with and enable our farming tenants to provide climate solutions, including issuing consent for renewable energy projects, supporting improvements to slurry infrastructure and updating lease terms to ensure climate resilience.

We always seek to invest more in climate solutions, although we do not have a specific target. In doing this we continue to adhere to our rigorous operational due diligence processes in line with our charitable mandate. The value of the investments may fluctuate, but it continues to be a focus. You can read more about our approach in our [Climate Action Plan](#) and you can find updates in our annual Stewardship Report.

Mrs Christine Burgess (Carlisle) to ask Church Commissioners:

Q101 Has there been any change in NIB investment portfolios relating to the disputed territories of Israel-occupied Palestinian Territory, since the war in Gaza began and settler attacks in the West Bank escalated?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A This response is given in the context of the Church Commissioners' portfolio. It is not appropriate for the Church Commissioners to comment on the composition of the portfolios of the other NIBs.

The Commissioners expect all investee companies to respect human rights and as part of our 'controversies process' we conduct screening on all our public holdings to understand where they may be causing, contributing or linked to egregious human rights abuses or breaches of international norms. Where companies are identified, they are reviewed and we take action, either directly through engagement or via our managers or third-party engagement provider. Where a satisfactory outcome is not going to be achieved via engagement, we will consider disinvestment.

The Church Commissioners have an ongoing human rights review process with regards to Disputed Territories, which we have continued to follow over recent months. This process implements our human rights policy which is informed by advice from the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. On a quarterly basis we review companies according to this process and restrict companies as required, but we do not disclose our restricted list because of the commercial sensitivities relating to it.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q102 In his answer to question 218 (July 2023) the First Church Estates Commissioner gave a detailed response about investments in companies which undertake business in or with the People's Republic of China. In a similar vein, could he please provide details of how much money the National Investing Bodies have invested (either directly or indirectly through intermediaries) in companies which undertake business in or with the State of Israel as defined by its 1967 borders, and whether the NIBs are also investing in any economic activity in the (illegally occupied) Palestinian Territory?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A At the current time the Church Commissioners estimate we have less than 0.11% of the fund invested directly in Israeli companies.

Investments and holdings in Israel, consistent with investments in any country or jurisdiction into which the Church Commissioners allocate capital, are subject to our Responsible Investing policies, which screen, inter alia, for any potential controversies which might be associated with a particular investment which the Church Commissioners might make to ensure that they are consistent with our values and principles.

Mr Andrew Smith (Rochester) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q103 On page 33 of the 2022 Church Commissioners' annual report, a breakdown is provided of the asset allocation of the overall portfolio. Please would it be possible to receive a more detailed list of the names of the underlying investment funds/strategies used in each asset class, the name of the external fund management company which runs them (where applicable), and the percentage weight allocated to each fund/strategy at 31 December 2022?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Our diversified portfolio is invested in a wide range of funds through a large number of investment managers. Some of these investments are subject to legal confidentiality conditions required by the investment managers and all are commercially sensitive and proprietary information, hence we do not put this information in the public domain. However the Assets Committee, in exercising its fiduciary responsibilities in relation to the endowment assets, has full oversight of the portfolio and access to this information as required.

We have provided a document for the noticeboard showing the types of strategies in each asset class, along with the number of managers or funds within each, with the percentage weights for both the 2022 and 2023 year ends.

Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q104 At the November 2023 Group of Sessions, in responding to my supplementary to Question 117 (in which I asked if he would review the "proportion of the annual legal fees that are assigned to the diocesan bishop and, consequently, paid by the Church Commissioners rather than DBFs ... which range from 25% to 59% across

the dioceses and ... have remained unchanged for each diocese as far back as at least 1974" ... and complete that review, "such that any ensuing recommendations can be incorporated into the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2024? "), the First Church Estates Commissioner said "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." Will the Commissioners please summarise how the particular points raised in my supplementary question were taken into account in drafting the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2024, and why it was deemed appropriate not to revise the proportions payable by the Church Commissioners of each diocese's Legal Officers Annual Fees, those widely varying proportions now having remained unchanged for 50 years?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The division in the allocation of cost to the DBF and the bishop in the Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2024 (GS 2367) was calculated by reference to a formula which was agreed by the General Synod in 2014, and which it has further endorsed subsequently. Explanatory note GS 1938-9X (February 2014) sets out the details. Explanatory notes GS 2367X/2368X (July 2024) set out the rationale behind the Fees Advisory Commission's recommendations for the 2024 Orders. The formula agreed by Synod in 2014 was based on the recommendations of an independent review which reported in 2013, and the results of a wide-ranging consultation on those recommendations. The Fees Advisory Commission considers that any significant change to the formula would require another process of review and consultation – and such a process would take time to undertake. The Commission has considered concerns about the formula which have been raised in recent years by Synod members and proposes to undertake an information-gathering process following this year's Synod. The aim of this information-gathering exercise will be to ascertain how the current formula is working, to identify points of concern and to determine whether a review of the formula is needed.

The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q105 The Church Commissioners' Annual Report for 2023 shows an overall return on its endowment fund in 2023 as 4.1%, however, within this, Value-Linked Loans returned 10.6%. Given that these loans underpin charitable housing provision for some clergy pensioners (and higher costs will lead to higher rents), how will the Church Commissioners ensure their returns are not at the expense of these clergy pensioners?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Value Linked Loans portfolio is made up of loans provided to the Pensions Board for some of their retirement housing as well as loans to Diocese and Theological colleges. The 2023 total return on the Value Linked Loans portfolio (10.6%) includes an income return (i.e. interest payments) of 4.1% (coincidentally the same as the overall fund return). The total return then also includes receipts for loans that have been redeemed and valuation changes in the properties for which the loans are provided.

The increase in clergy pensioners' rent is not related to the total investment return made by the Church Commissioners on Value-Linked Loans. Rents for those living in CHARM accommodation provided by the Pensions Board increased by 10.1% from 1 April 2023 and 6.7% from 1 April 2024, in line with the 12-month CPI increase to the preceding September. These figures are in line with increases in the clergy pension.

The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q106 In February Group of Sessions, there was comment made that 2024 will represent for retiring clergy, in real terms, the lowest pension provision for years. Will the Church Commissioners be willing to make a one-off payment to recently retired clergy to address this whilst the discussions to resolve the bigger picture are taking place?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Church Commissioners and Pensions Board have worked together and agreed to provide two discretionary increases in relation to clergy pensions with effect from 1 April 2024.

Firstly, clergy pensions in payment increased by 6.7%, in line with the 12 month increase in CPI to September 2023, rather than being limited to the capped increases as per the Scheme Rules, which are 5% for service that is the funding responsibility of the Commissioners.

Secondly, a discretionary one-off (and permanent) uplift of 5% was made to pensions payable to recently-retired clergy, i.e. the members of the clergy pension scheme who retired in 2023/24 (between 1 April 2023-31 March 2024). This was in recognition of the extent of the difference between the 1% increase in the previous year's National Minimum Stipend (which is the reference point for the starting level of pension) and the 1 April 2023 increase of 10.1% to clergy pensions in payment (which, for the Commissioners' pension obligations, comprised a capped increase of 5.0% and a discretionary increase of 5.1%). As set out in GS Misc 1391, this action goes some way to respond to limb (c) of the motion passed in February.

Dr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q107 Please analyse the totality of Church Commissioners' funds in terms of those available for investment in parishes and those for other objectives. (It has been suggested that the funds being made available for chattel slavery issues, for example, will not affect those for investment in parishes, because they come from different sources.)

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A Almost all of the Church's historic endowment managed by the Church Commissioners is held in their General Fund. This is held for a range of purposes, for example pensions, support for mission and ministry in parishes and other worshipping communities (directed through dioceses) and support for Bishops' and Cathedral ministry. Assets are not hypothecated for particular purposes.

I confirm that the £100 million that the Commissioners agreed to make available over three triennia (2023-31) for a programme of impact investment, grant making and further research in response to Queen Anne's Bounty's links with chattel enslavement did not result in any reining back of the spending plans for 2023-25 and the outline spending plans to 2031 presented to this Synod in July 2022 (see GS 2262). This funding together with the allocation of funding for the national redress scheme and also discretionary increases in clergy pensions have been incorporated into the Church Commissioners funding plans, which remain fully affordable according to the most recent interim actuarial reviews.

Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark) to ask the Church Commissioners:

Q108 What consideration (if any) has been given to the individual personal liability that Trustees of the Church Commissioners bear in the event that the Commissioners spend the assets of the charity outwith the purpose and objects of the Charity, and to the best of the Commissioners' knowledge, have any trustees, either collectively

or individually, sought or received insurance to cover this liability?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:

A The Church Commissioners ensure that they act in accordance with their legal powers and that trustees act consistently with their legal duties, taking into account professional advice as appropriate. Like many trustee boards, the Board of Governors has had trustee indemnity insurance in place for a number of years, taking into account the requirements of s.189 of the Charities Act 2011.

PENSIONS BOARD

The Revd Robert Lawrance (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q109 Understanding that the Pensions Board works with external fund managers and excludes a range of undesirable investments, what scope is there for actively choosing to invest more in companies which do good such as climate solutions?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of The Church of England Pensions Board:

A In the context of stewarding a diversified investment portfolio there is scope to use managers or strategies that are not only taking account of climate change risks but seeking to invest in opportunities and solutions. One way we already do this is through the FTSE TPI Climate Transition Index which intentionally increases investments in companies that are assessed most positively by the independent TPI analysis. Additionally, our infrastructure managers have several (and increasing) investments in climate solutions, and bespoke mandates held by specialist managers in private equity include a focus on climate and sustainability solutions. The Board actively monitors what exposure we have through our investments to climate solutions and reports on this separately. One key area the Board remains focused on is the role our investments can play in supporting the transition and real world emissions reductions.

The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q110 It was once the case that clergy removal expenses on retirement from stipendiary ministry were met by the Pensions Board (in a manner similar to relocation within and between dioceses during active stipendiary service). Could the Chairman of the Pensions Board inform the Synod (a) when and why the apparent transfer of responsibility to dioceses (which appears to be exercised inconsistently) occurred, and (b) whether or not it formed part of the scaling down of pension benefits prior to 2011?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A To the best of knowledge of our longer serving staff and a quick check in historic statutory accounts, neither the Board or Commissioners have covered moving costs at retirement – at least in the last 20 years and probably longer. Therefore, if there ever was such a practice, any change was not related to the 2011 changes in pension benefits.

Clergy pension scheme members do of course continue to receive a lump sum at retirement in addition to their pension.

Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q111 GS Misc 1391 gives the welcome news of a 5% increase in pension in April 2024 for clergy who retired in the previous year. This was in response to part (c) of the resolution about clergy pensions passed unanimously by Synod in February, which was as follows: 'That this Synod ... request the Archbishops' Council, the Pensions Board and the Church Commissioners to consider what steps may be taken to

remedy the fall in the real value of pensions for clergy retiring since 2021, and to avoid such a fall reoccurring in any future period of high inflation.'

GS Misc states that: 'This action goes some way to addressing the issue identified...'

I calculate that clergy who retired in 2022-3 and (even with the additional 5%) those who retired last year have pensions about 9% short of inflation (CPIH) since 2021. What further actions have been, or are, under consideration to address this more fully?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A Having each taken actuarial advice the Pensions Board and the Church Commissioners considered that any further adjustments (above 5%) would cause further inconsistencies with future cohorts of retiring Clergy.

As noted in GS Misc 1391, removing the year lag in the reference stipend for starting pensions would avoid the specific anomaly you identified, from arising in future. This looks to be possible in principle – it would require changes both to the Scheme Rules and the Pensions Measure 2018 and there are also other considerations described in that paper.

The Revd Paul Langham (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q112 Given the prospect of the restoration of clergy pensions in line with the suggestions made in Dr Paul's Private Member's Motion, where can those serving clergy who are approaching retirement age and considering deferring their retirement in order to benefit from any future changes find guidance on how to make this decision, and information as to whether such change is to be backdated, and the timescale within which this change will be completed?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A I appreciate and understand the sentiment behind this question. However, I regret that generic guidance of the type envisaged here is not possible because of the variety of personal circumstances. This would require regulated financial advice and the Pensions Board is not authorised to provide that.

Clergy pension scheme members have the ability to run retirement illustrations via the Pensions Board's online pensions portal and may request pension quotes from the helpline.

The Pensions Board is not responsible for initiating changes to Rules of the Church of England Funded Pension Scheme and any such changes require Synodical approval. However, the questioner may wish to refer to GS Misc 1391 which provides an update following the February motion and an answer from the Chair of the Ministry Council elsewhere on this question paper. I would also note that whenever changes are proposed, the Pensions Board works hard to mitigate any unintended consequences (e.g. for those approaching retirement or recently retired) and to provide as much information as possible to those affected.

The Ven Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q113 Given that the needs of those retiring early on health grounds are different from those retiring at full pensionable age, how is the Pension Board catering to the needs of this vulnerable group?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The pensions administration team considers all requests sympathetically. In addition to assisting with enquiries on ill health retirement, they signpost applicants

to the housing retirement support and welfare services teams if the member is not already in contact with them or is unaware that support is available. Where there is a Housing need, a bespoke response is often required, and the Board will endeavour to provide a home which will meet particular requirements (such as a larger property for those with a young family). Where needs are complex, it can take some time to identify, purchase and (if necessary) adapt properties for the household, particularly where retirement comes years ahead of when the household had hoped, and little planning has taken place.

The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q114 In the Private Member's Motion Debate on Clergy Pensions in February 2024, the Chair of the Pensions Board stated (page 409 of the Report of Proceedings) that it was for Synod to set the pensions level. ("Let me be clear at the outset: the Pensions Board does not set the benefits. That is for you, Synod, as advised by Archbishops' Council"). Would the Chair please confirm at which group of sessions this was last brought before Synod for discussion and approval, and when it is next due to come before Synod for re-approval?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The benefit structure for the Church of England Funded Pension Scheme (CEFPS) is set and implemented according to the Scheme Rules agreed by Synod. Once agreed, the Rules stand until such time as they are amended - there is no reapproval process.

The most recent change was in 2022. In February 2022, the Synod debated the report of the Clergy Remuneration Review. Included within that report was a recommendation to harmonise the definitions of ill-health used in the CEFPS with that used in the pre-1998 scheme. The required rule change was sponsored by the Archbishops' Council, leading to an Amending Deed approved at the July 2022 Group of Sessions.

Prior to this, the last substantive set of benefit changes were those in 2011, which were debated across at least two Groups of Sessions in 2010.

It is for the Business Committee to determine the future agenda of Synod.

The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q115 Church of England Pensioners were notified by email on 30th May that their pensions payment, due on Friday 31st May, would be delayed until Monday 3rd June. This was attributed to 'human error'. In the light of a similar human error causing delays to clergy stipends earlier this year, what procedures have been put in place to ensure that staff are fully supported so as to avoid repeats of these errors which cause significant inconvenience to working and retired clergy?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A On behalf of the Board, may I first repeat our apology to clergy pensioners who were affected by the delay on the May clergy pension payroll. Let me be clear: this issue should not have happened.

I am determined that learnings are captured. It is important that we understand in detail what happened and any underlying causes and identify the appropriate steps to mitigate the risk.

To this end, audit firm BDO has been commissioned to undertake a review of this incident and the NCIs' shared treasury processes more generally. Though the issue was not the same as that which affected clergy stipends in January, they are similar and the link between the two incidents will be considered.

I suspect however that a significant contributory factor is the risk inherent in the level of manual processing required to run the payrolls. Pension payrolls are processed and authorised by the pensions payroll team, and then passed to the finance team for further processing, authorisation, and transmission to the bank. The longer-term fix is an automation project which was already well underway before either of these incidents.

I would like to record my thanks to staff in the Pensions Board and shared services who worked to resolve the matter and support pensioners over the ensuing days, including the weekend.

Ms Helen Lamb (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q116 Given the issue in January with clergy stipend payments being paid late, and then the same issue happening again for clergy pension payments in May; please provide the most recent external controls report (ISAE 3402, SAS 70 or suitable equivalent) which covers this area, and a summary of the discussion of the Audit and Risk Committee's review of that report.

Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A On behalf of the Board, may I first repeat our apology to clergy pensioners who were affected by the delay on the May clergy pension payroll. Let me be clear: this issue should not have happened.

The most recent previous Internal Audit on pensions payroll was concluded in January 2022. It gave the top level of assurance with no significant issues identified. All internal audits are considered by the relevant Audit Committee(s) and the statutory auditors.

I have addressed the issue and our next steps in more detail in the answer to the Revd Dr Brenda Wallace's question (115).

The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q117 How many of the Pension Board's current rental tenants took early retirement on health grounds or are the widow/ers of clergy who died before retiring?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A While individual circumstances form a key part of the conversations when housing is being arranged and through the on-going relationship with residents, the specific information requested in is not recorded in a way which allows this question to be easily answered.

For annual planning purposes, we assume around seven ill health retirement and one or two death in service situations where we support the bereaved family with a home. (This compares to 109 tenancy starts across Rental and Community Living in 2023.) The actual number will of course vary from these averages and most importantly, each case is unique for the household affected and we seek to respond professionally and pastorally to each situation with that in mind.

The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q118 What is the annual rental income from Pension Board housing for retired clergy and their dependents?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A Rental income received for the year to 31.12.23 totalled £7,7873,000 for rental properties; £531,000 from shared ownership properties; and £1,589,000 in relation to Community Living. [Source: CEPB 2023 draft Financial Statements which are

due to be approved at a Board meeting on 11 July 2024. All figures rounded to nearest thousand.]

The Revd Rachel Wakefield (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q119 Given the grant of £9.5m from the Archbishops' Council for this purpose, how many new rental properties has the Pension Board purchased for retired clergy since the grant was received?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The Board is extremely grateful for the additional financial support of £9m provided by the Archbishops' Council in 2023. In essence, this funding enabled the Board to keep the rental scheme open to new applicants in the face of significantly higher costs brought on by inflation and higher interest rates.

The Board purchases properties using financing arrangements and the grant was applied to pay down a portion of this debt and so reduce operating costs and free up borrowing capacity for further purchases. Even so, financing costs totalled £9,144,000 in 2023, 10% higher than in 2022 (even after paying down £9m of debt). Property maintenance and insurance costs were 5% higher.

The Board purchased 31 new rental properties in 2023 and across Rental and Community Living there were 109 new tenancy starts in 2023 (i.e. an average of more than two per week).

The Revd Robert Thompson (London) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q120 What is the average monthly cost, including rental and service charges, for a married couple living in the Pension Board's Community Living properties?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The Rent and Service Charge levels vary slightly between the seven Community Living settings. The average monthly rent for a larger flat is £775 (£735 for a smaller flat) and the average monthly service charge is £1,091 for a single person and £1,605 for a couple.

Note: Service charge depends on the actual services at the specific setting which are subject to consultation with residents. Service Charge includes all utilities, catering, use of laundry facilities, staffing and out of hours community alarm service, as well as maintenance of communal facilities and equipment such as the lifts, warden call system and fire alarm, and communal garden costs.

The Revd Robert Thompson (London) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q121 Given the past promises of the Pension Board to look after clergy who do not have the means to buy a home in their retirement, what steps is the Board taking to ensure that those who retired some years ago are able to move to properties that meet their changing needs in much later life?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The Pensions Board offers rental properties across the country for retiring clergy households who meet the eligibility criteria. Tenancies are offered on a long term basis and at a significant discount to market rent.

We recognise that circumstances change in retirement and encourage residents for whom that is the case to talk to our Housing Officers.

In such cases, we seek to work with the individual/household to look at their circumstances, where they want to move to, and what might be available in the area. In the first instance, given high demand from retirees for homes (which have to be prioritised), we work with them to look at other options that might best suit

their needs including purpose-built accommodation. That is often the quickest route to a move and has been a feature of our service for a while now. But we do consider moves to Church homes too at other stages of the process, depending on circumstances.

This is a complex area, and our Director of Housing would be happy to have a conversation with you to understand the background to your question and discuss this in more detail. Perhaps you could also kindly message me with the specific source for the statement in the preamble to your question as I would like to understand this further.

The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q122 What consideration does the Pension Board give to the current geographical area of clergy on their retirement housing list when new properties are purchased and how are clergy and dioceses engaged in the process?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A The Board continues to purchase properties for the retirement housing portfolio – 31 were purchased last year and 13 completed by the end of April this year. The geographic preferences of those seeking housing are given great attention.

Location is heavily informed by the information we have from the households who have registered with the Board for retirement housing. Additionally, more than 1300 serving stipendiary clergy recently completed a survey which included questions on geographic preferences for those who think they may need Church retirement housing. This showed a very wide spread of locations covering almost all dioceses, with Exeter and York particularly popular. This is useful information which will assist the acquisition programme. (A report on feedback from this survey and the Enabling Choice consultation is to be published shortly.) Of course, there are some parts of the country where property is particularly expensive both to buy and rent – even on a subsidised basis, notably London. Those who particularly need to be in expensive locations are likely to be better served through alternative providers and we will work with households to explore these.

The primary relationship is between the housing officer and the clergy household, with liaison with Archdeacons/diocesan staff as appropriate.

The Revd Canon Claire Lording (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q123 How many vacant properties does the Pension Board currently have available to rent and what is the geographical spread of these properties?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board::

A The most recent property bulletin (shared approximately every 8 weeks to those who have registered for Church retirement housing) advertised 15 rental properties spread across Yorkshire, Lancashire, the West Midlands, East Anglia, the Southwest, Hampshire and Wiltshire, and the south coast. The selection of properties changes regularly as properties are removed once reserved, and further properties are added as they are purchased, in the conveyancing process, or come available for re-letting. The bulletin provides information for each property on its location, rent, nearest church and local amenities, plus photographs, floorplan, EPC information and a summary of planned works.

The bulletin also advertises vacancies at the Board's Community Living settings, which are located in or near Scarborough, Lytham St Annes, Cheltenham, Leicester, Worthing, Exeter and Hindhead.

The Revd James Pitkin (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q124 How many residential properties (suitable for retiring clergy) does the Pension Board currently have - and, of these, how many are available to rent? What is the geographical spread of these (vacant) properties (by County or Diocese)?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A As at the end of April, the Board held 1,157 rental properties. (The number of properties changes month to month with acquisitions and disposals.)

As covered in a separate question, the June property bulletin advertised 15 rental properties spread across Yorkshire, Lancashire, the West Midlands, East Anglia, the Southwest, Hampshire and Wiltshire, and the south coast. Please note a) this excludes properties which have been reserved by retiring households in advance of their retirement, b) the bulletin includes properties which are going through the conveyancing process and so not yet owned by the Board, and c) properties on the bulletin change regularly.

The Revd Canon Claire Lording (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q125 How many clergy/dependents are on the Pension Board's current list of those looking for retirement housing?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A We presently have approximately 200 households registered with the housing service. In the main these are stipendiary clergy households anticipating retirement in the next 5 years. There are also existing residents seeking a move.

This figure probably understates the potential demand for Church retirement housing. Over 1300 stipendiary clergy responded to a survey over the winter. Just under a quarter of respondents indicated they expect to need support with retirement housing, while 1 in 10 of respondents expecting to retire in the next two years had not yet taken basic steps for retirement preparation such as looking at their pension statement. The data from this survey is being used to inform the financial projections for retirement housing and the potential cost of that to the Church, where properties are being purchased, and the design of new services proposed in the *Enabling Choice* materials.

However, we should not assume that all of this demand necessarily translates into directly provided Church properties. For instance, in the last six months, the Board supported 15 registered households to meet their retirement housing needs other than through directly provided Church housing. This has both helped the household (particularly those who, through information and signposting, have been able to buy their own retirement home), and allows the focus of scarce resources on those most in need.

The Revd Canon Katrina Scott (Gloucester) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q126 Given the cost-of-living crisis, caps on benefits, and the failure of state and personal pensions to match inflation and living costs, will the Pension Board agree to cap the percentage rise on rents for retired clergy and their dependents?

Mr Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A Clergy (and state) pensions increased by 10.1% in April 2023 based on the September 2022 CPI inflation figure; and 6.7% in April 2024 based on September 2023 CPI inflation. In both years, the clergy pension increase was higher than the guaranteed increase in the scheme rules as a result of discretionary increases applied by the Pensions Board (for post-1998 benefits) and Church Commissioners (pre-1998 benefits). Rent increases have historically followed inflation with

reference to the clergy pension increase, and rents increased by 6.7% from April 2024.

Rent increases are considered extremely carefully by the Board, and we are of course conscious of the cost to residents. I repeat the statement in the rent increase letters that any resident in financial difficulty should contact our team to discuss their circumstances.

However, the Board also has obligations of financial stewardship. All organisations have faced rising costs and pressures from inflation. The Pensions Board is no different and the effect of higher interest rates and inflation led to debt service costs on Rental properties in 2023 rising to absorb 86% of the rental income received from those properties. This means that our total income is simply unable to meet the cost of providing the current services and we have needed emergency funding from the Archbishops' Council whilst a more sustainable model is considered.

The Revd Kat Champion-Spall (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q127 What assistance is the Pension Board able to offer clergy with making accessibility adaptations after they have moved into a property?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A We seek to assist and enable residents to live as independently as they can in their own home as needs change over time in health or mobility. Where circumstances change, our Aids and Adaptations Officer will seek to support residents in making the necessary changes to their environment to help them to continue to live comfortably in their homes for as long as possible. We aim to achieve this by facilitating the effective planning, consultation and delivery of aids and adaptations according to means and family circumstances.

Ms Fiona MacMillan (London) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q128 What provision is the Pension Board able to offer for existing residents whose needs change, meaning that their current home is no longer appropriate, given that there is very little accessible housing available from other providers?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A Existing residents who require aids or adaptations or are finding their circumstances are changing should contact the housing team to discuss their specific situation. Where possible we seek to support residents to stay in their existing home, for example through the provision of aids and adaptations, including engagement with support and funding available from the local authority.

Where it is not possible to meet needs in the existing property, we will work with the household to explore a move whether that is to an appropriate another provider, Community Living, or another church retirement property. We also have a specialist adviser who can assist residents and their families in navigating the complexities of social care.

The Revd Canon Alice Kemp (Bristol) to ask Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q129 How many fully accessible properties are there in the Pension Board's portfolio of rental properties for retired clergy and their dependents?

Mr Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A This information is not readily available for the Rental portfolio. There is also a definitional issue as "fully accessible" will depend on the specific accessibility needs of the household.

Almost all of the 213 flats and communal areas across the seven Community Living settings are highly accessible by design, including for example step free access throughout, and each flat has a bathroom which can be readily adapted for different needs or converted to a full wet room.

The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

Q130 Could at least 20% of CHARM properties be fully step-free and wheelchair accessible, and could a significant proportion of properties be close to good transport links for tenants who do not drive?

Clive Mather to reply as Chair of the Church of England Pensions Board:

A I welcome the sentiment behind this question, but a set percentage would not be helpful, given that in reality we already offer a service which takes these key considerations into account.

Where a household needs a fully wheelchair accessible property we will seek to meet this need which may require a bespoke purchase, Community Living, or a specialist alternative provider.

On registering interest, households meet with a Housing Officer and look at the range of housing options that may be available with us and with other providers to meet current and potential future needs in older age. When appropriate we arrange for an Occupational Therapist assessment to identify aids, adaptations or special requirements for properties.

The Board looks carefully at a range of factors for new properties including suitability for older living and accessibility of local amenities. For example, of the 15 properties on the June bulletin, 14 were within 1 mile of a CofE Church; 14 within a mile of a bus stop; 12 within a mile of a shop; and 13 within a mile of a GP/hospital. We avoid purchasing isolated properties or those with steep slopes or other features which become difficult to manage in older life.

The same statistics are not true of the wider portfolio, mainly because the pre-2015 CHARM model gave a fairly free hand to clergy in selecting properties, resulting in houses which are less close to amenities and costly to maintain and adapt.

Where properties have been adapted for previous residents it is very difficult to attract interest from prospective applicants who may like the location but are put off by wet rooms, grab rails, stairlifts etc, and will only accept the property if these features are removed.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Mrs Sue Cavill (Derby) to ask the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

Q131 I welcome the decisions made by the NIBs to divest from fossil fuels, which was shared with the General Synod in July 2023. However, this means that the Ethical Investment Advisory Group's (EIAG's) Climate Change policy document <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/climate-change-policy-updated-2020.pdf> is now out of date, as it does not reflect the change in practice by the NIBs. As this document is used to guide investment decisions by other parts of the church, how are the plans announced in the EIAG Update (GS Misc 1390) going for a revised document to bring it up to date?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as Deputy Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

A A minor interim update to the EIAG advice paper is pending to reference the separate, independent decisions taken by each of the national investing bodies to disinvest from oil and gas companies. This will be completed by the start of the July sessions.

The EIAG and national investing bodies are in the process of reviewing the full suite of policies and guidance documents, including those on climate change, to ensure they are up to date.

Mrs Valerie Hallard (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

Q132 Has the EIAG issued any revised advice to the NIBs since the war in Gaza began and settler attacks in the occupied West Bank escalated?

Mr Alan Smith to reply as Deputy Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:

A Following the start of the war in Gaza, the EIAG had an in-depth discussion on a responsible investment approach to Occupied Territories and reaffirmed a Human Rights based approach that the national investing bodies independently implement.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

Professor Roy Faulkner (Leicester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q133 The recent report of the SMMIB shows that Strategic Development Fund expenditure of £198 million on resource churches between 2014 and 2022 had resulted in realistic recruitment numbers of 16,000. The target, explained in the Chote Report 2022, was 89,375. Can the Vision and Strategy group explain why they are still planning to support resource church initiatives in the next round of triennium funding (£300 million over the next three years), instead of traditional parish churches, which have a much better potential for new recruitment, and parish share provision?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A It is incorrect that between 2014 and 2022 £198m was spent on resource churches; funding was awarded to both traditional parish churches and new churches. The total award was £198m; £126m has been spent. Most churches designated as resource churches are parish churches. The Chote report says over half of funding in 2014-2021 went to existing churches. Around half went to resource churches. The figure of 16,000 from the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) report is the most conservative of several models, ranging up to 27,000, against a total hoped for number of 75,680 once complete. At the time of the exercise, it was evident the Covid pandemic had impacted these projects, and they had only drawn down 60% of their funding. Plans expect outcomes to be fully realised after funding is drawn down.

Funding awarded by the SMMIB in 2023 is detailed in its annual report (as GS Misc 1383) on page 21 and shows how much the Board has invested in parishes. It says that in 2023, 46% of funding was for work with children and young people, primarily in parishes, 30% to revitalising parishes, 15% to representing the communities we serve and 8% to new worshipping communities. Recent awards to Blackburn, London and Southwark involved large-scale investments in parishes.

The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q134 "Overall, all-age weekly attendance at Church of England churches rose to 685,000 last year, from 654,000 in 2022, an increase of 4.7 per cent. The number of children attending weekly increased from 87,000 in 2022 to 92,000 (up 5.7 per cent)." What percentage of that growth came from SMMIB funded churches?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The 2023 data at a parish level has not yet been verified to a level that would enable this kind of analysis. Once this dataset is fully cleaned and confirmed,

national staff will share the findings with the questioner (this is likely to be in the autumn).

The SMMIB annual report 2023 (GS Misc 1383) includes an analysis of the change in attendance between 2019-22 among children and young people in 300 parishes funded by SDF compared to the national picture. These SDF funded parishes had a change in attendance which was 20 percentage points higher than other parishes. This is equivalent to more than 1,000 additional children and young people in these churches than might have been expected.

This is only where there is particular deep investment in children and young people, or church revitalisation - there are many more parishes who have benefited from SMMIB funding through diocesan support for pipelines of clergy and lay leaders and training and support for parishes. Further, around 2000 parishes are supported by LInC funding.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q135 Recommendation 5 of Released for Mission, passed by General Synod in February 2015, stated that the provision of administration in rural multi-parish benefices was “a legitimate call on mission funding”. How is this now reflected in SMIBB and other strategic funding streams and can you give examples of successful bids from Dioceses in line with this recommendation?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The purpose of national funding overseen by the SMMI Board is to enable the Church's Vision and Strategy to be realised in local parishes and communities, to multiply fruitful ministry as part of a holistic diocesan strategy. The Diocesan Investment Programme element of this funding is designed to support change and growth through distributing funding to dioceses to undertake their strategic plans. Dioceses may include administration in rural contexts as part of their funding proposals in line with the DIP criteria.

One example is in Winchester, where the diocese is working to support the 'Benefice of the Future' through the Growing Rural Parishes programme, which includes 13 multi-parish rural benefices. The project has provided features such as improved broadband connection, contactless giving and centralised administrative services to the churches to enable them to focus resources on being more missional.

Mr Clive Billenness (Europe) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q136 In the November 2021 Group of Sessions, at Question 22 I asked about the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in the Church of England. As a verbal supplementary question, I asked if Church institutions could be instructed to include data in their Additional Notes To The Accounts. The response on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council was that “The NCIs are reviewing their policy in this area to ensure that in the limited and appropriate circumstances where agreements might be used to resolve disputes any use of confidentiality provisions are subject to careful analysis of the merits in each individual case and take into account the potential impact on the individual concerned, including the provision of legal and pastoral support. Any ensuing guidance will be shared more widely in order to encourage a consistent approach.”

As this answer is now almost 3 years old, has any ensuing guidance been produced and where it is published please?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A In 2021 the HR team produced guidance on settlement agreements within the National Church Institutions (NCIs) which was subsequently agreed by the NCI Chief Officers. The guidance included a requirement for an annual report on the subject to be made to the Chief Officers.

This guidance was created specifically for the NCIs but was shared with HR professionals in dioceses and cathedrals to encourage and share good practice.

Mrs Debrah McIsaac (Salisbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q137 As a result of the cost of living crisis in 2022, the Archbishop's Council and Church Commissioners made £3m available to dioceses for clergy support, based on the number of stipendiary clergy in each diocese, and distributed in block grants to Diocesan Finance and Bishop's Discretionary accounts. Can you confirm how this money has been accounted for in each diocese, how many clergy benefitted and how much of the unused grants were returned to central fund?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Diocesan Boards of Finance and Discretionary Funds which received these grants should have accounted for them as restricted grant income and expenditure should have been paid out of the resulting restricted fund. Accounting from grants is the responsibility of the recipient and is reviewed by their auditors. The Archbishops' Council does not routinely review how grant recipients account for grants and has not done so in this case.

I can confirm that none of the ministry hardship fund grants were returned, and we are confident that the grants were used to help alleviate hardship for clergy and other ministers, although we do not have figures for the number of clergy and other ministers who received grants.

Mrs Rebecca Chapman (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q138 Given the recent propensity for detailed legislative work to take longer than planned to come back to Synod (eg National Governance Measure, First Consideration deferred from Feb '24 to July '24; Updated Mission & Pastoral Measure - First Consideration deferred from July '24 to at least Feb '25) what consideration has been given by the Archbishops' Council of reviewing the impact of the Transforming Effectiveness programme on the timeliness of legislative change and in particular any consideration given to increase the number of staff employed and working on such programmes.?'?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A We aim to bring draft legislation before the Synod as soon as reasonably practicable. Before this can be done, policy work has to be completed in sufficient detail to give clear drafting instructions to Legislative Counsel. Depending on the complexity and number of the issues involved, this can take significant time from the staff leading on the work, the Legal Office, committees or Programme Boards, and the body sponsoring the legislation: often the Archbishops' Council.

The scope of the two Measures mentioned in the question is wide. Our approach aims to give Synod as complete a picture as possible at First Consideration Stage and reduce the number of amendments that staff may need to feed in at the Revision stage.

The staffing required for such work is kept under review. In the case of the National Governance Programme a dedicated Programme team has been established.

We do not believe that the Transforming Effectiveness programme impacted the legislative drafting referenced in the question. The deferral of the Governance legislation from February to July this year was as a result of the timing of the publication of the Jay Report, given the potential impact of the Report on the proposed legislation.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q139 How many parishes have as patron a society which does not normally appoint women as incumbents?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Archbishops' Council does not have sufficient data to enable us to answer this question. However, where no resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration is in place, appointments should be open to both women and men.

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q140 How many parishes have as patron a society which requires applicants for Incumbent posts to agree to Statements of Belief in addition to the vows they made at ordination and licensing?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A I am not, personally, aware of any that do. Furthermore, although the patron appoints the incumbent, it is for the parish to provide a statement of its "conditions, needs and traditions" and it is recommended practice that the role description be agreed between the parish and the bishop.

The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q141 What progress has been made in implementing the motion in February 2024 of Synod in relation to restoring levels of clergy stipend and pension, and at what date is it anticipated that this implementation be completed?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Archbishops' Council

A This work needs to be considered in parallel with and feed into the work of the Triennium Funding Working Group, given the inherent link to the use of national church resources. This is described in GS Misc 1391 The triennium process will commence in earnest later this year and should conclude in the middle of 2025. The GS Misc paper also identifies that legislative changes may be needed (e.g. on the reference year's National Minimum Stipend (NMS) for pensions) and that process would also take time. This suggests April 2026 might be a target date for significant change. Meanwhile, the 7% increase in the NMS from April 2024 directly benefitted those on the NMS this year and will uplift the starting point for pensions from April 2025.

Mr Christopher Townsend (Ely) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q142 When Synod last met in February we were advised that a review of the guidance document 'Supporting Asylum Seekers - Guidance for Church of England Clergy' would be undertaken and was described as 'a matter of urgency'. What progress has been made in undertaking this review and when is it intended to publish the revised guidance?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A I am pleased to report to Synod that the revision of the advice to clergy on working with asylum seekers has been completed.

It was our intention to release it to coincide with Refugee Week during June. However, the Prime Minister's decision to call a General Election put this date within the campaign period and so we have held the launch back in accordance with our general policy of not releasing material relating to policy during an election campaign.

The final draft has been reviewed by the MPA Council, the Secretary General and the bishops most involved in migration and asylum issues. Final checks and sign-off will take place immediately after Synod and it will be launched at a suitable date in the near future, barring any immediate change in government policy requiring further changes.

Mrs Alianore Smith (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q143 Considering February 2022's unanimously passed motion commending the work of the Clewer Initiative and other organisations tackling modern day slavery, and noting the Second Church Estates Commissioner's response to Caroline Ansell's parliamentary question on 23 May 2024 regarding the future of the Clewer Initiative, what action is now being taken by the church centrally to continue tackling and preventing Modern Day Slavery?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A We are grateful to the Community of St John the Baptist (the "Clewer Sisters") for the resources that have enabled this work to be so effective, but it was a major blow when the continuation funding that we had been encouraged to apply for was not granted. Our focus since then has been, first, to seek alternative funding sources, which has not been successful, most funders preferring to sponsor novel, rather than established, work and, second, to wind up the Clewer Initiative in good order, ensuring that the assets of the project, such as the Safe Car Wash App, will be taken over by others. Handing on the assets is proceeding well, but not yet finally sewn up. Staff who did not leave for new jobs have been redeployed in the NCIs, and the search for other funding streams continues. By the end of the year, we shall be in a position to determine the best way forward, The lead bishop on modern slavery, the Bishop of Bristol, has been active in Parliament and elsewhere on this issue, and we shall involve her in thinking about the future shape of our work.

The Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam (York) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q144 What consideration did the Archbishops' Council give to requesting specific additional funds from the Church Commissioners in order to continue the work of the church's response to Modern Slavery (known as the Clewer Initiative) when the grant funding which previously funded the work was known to be stopping?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Clewer Initiative has always relied on external funds, with the funders, the Community of St John the Baptist, partnering with the Archbishops' Council. Although the funding included buying services from the AC, a considerable amount of additional staff time was involved in setting up and managing the project. NCI resources have always been involved.

After seven years, the Clewer Initiative was ready for major reshaping to capitalise on its successes and address new dimensions in Modern Day Slavery. Much work went into designing a new programme, attempting to take into account the very

specific requests of the funders. Unfortunately, for reasons of their own, the Trustees of CSJB refused to discuss our proposal with us and announced their decision to cease all funding. Our remaining efforts have been devoted to winding up the work well whilst seeking alternative external funding – so far, without success.

So we now have a project proposal which was not the one we would have designed had we had a free hand, and no resources to develop it further for any alternative funder. We would be happy to approach the Church Commissioners, alongside consideration of other national Church priorities – or other potential funders – but the proposal developed for the CSJB would need to be considerably redesigned first.

Mr Tim Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q145 The Church of England has a number of Bishops sitting in the House of Lords giving them a significant platform in the national debate. What reports or resources does the Church publish to allow the general public to understand the impact and contributions these Bishops make to such debates?

Mr Mark Sheard to reply on behalf of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Church of England's Parliamentary Team maintains a website www.churchinparliament.org that contains all speeches, votes, oral and written questions asked by Lords Spiritual since 2013. This is searchable by bishop or keyword. They also have an account on X: @churchstate. The Parliamentary Team and Church House Communications send daily digests of contributions made by Lords Spiritual to select media. Lords Spiritual routinely give interviews and write articles on their parliamentary roles and priorities. The Parliamentary Team advises and resources Lords Spiritual on communication of their work locally, working with Diocesan Communications Officers.

Ms Clare Williams (Norwich) to ask Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q146 Can the Archbishops' Council provide a definition of 'flourishing youth, children and families' ministry' within a parish context?

The Archbishop of York to reply as the Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. Both the Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops discussed this and as a rough guide, a church with flourishing children, youth and families' (CYF) ministry is defined as having 25+ (u16) Average Weekly Attendance (AWA). This represents a critical mass, less than an average school class. There are many further characteristics we might expect of a parish with 'flourishing CYF ministry', including an intentional focus on making active young missionary disciples; high-quality, age-appropriate mission and ministry with 0-18s; children in every age bracket; welcome and engagement of parents and carers; a culture of growth, evangelism and discipleship amongst CYF; of developing and releasing young leaders and leaders of mission and ministry with CYF. These are reflected in the 2022 Savanta Com Res research with churches growing engagement with children and young people, across all traditions, rural and urban contexts. Of course, a church with a flourishing CYF ministry may not exhibit all these characteristics equally, some may be well-established, and others will be more embryonic. The Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops are committed to ensuring such a ministry is within reach of every young person with at least one such church for every 4,000 young people. Having said that every child matters, and every Church, even if it only has one child at the moment, is, I'm sure,

determined to make that child welcome and build ministry for people of all ages. Our aim to grow a church that is younger and more diverse will aim to support all churches in their ministry to CYF.

The Revd Will Pearson-Gee (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q147 The May press release communicating the provisional attendance figures from 2023 gave many readers the impression that the Church of England has now moved from a downward trend to a trend of numerical growth, and this impression has been communicated in a number of dioceses. In fact, the numbers suggest a continuing slow return from Covid lockdown, and attendance figures are still nearly 20% below what they were in 2019. What action is planned to correct this impression and ensure that an accurate picture is communicated to bishops and dioceses?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. The May press release accurately reflected an increase in 2023 provisional attendance figures while clearly and prominently stating the figures remain below 2019 levels. This was widely reflected in the resulting media coverage.

As the press release stated, we don't yet know whether this growth is a trend but there is encouragement that our focus on reaching more people with the good news of Jesus Christ, establishing new Christian communities, wherever they are, revitalising our parishes, and seeking to become a younger and more diverse church is beginning to make a difference. Stories emerging from around the country suggest churches reached new people in 2023. I hope Synod members will rejoice in this and pray that we will continue to reach new people with the good news of Jesus Christ in 2024. Telling the story of what God is doing in places where the church is growing inspires others to have confidence in their faith, and in the many possibilities within their own church.

The Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops discussed the data at their May meetings and dioceses are examining the provisional data at local level. The full data set for Statistics for Mission will be released in the autumn.

The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q148 Who is taking responsibility for including an intentional focus on and dedication of resources towards racial justice in the Vision and Strategy work on making the Church of England younger and more diverse, and how is this being monitored?

The Archbishop of York to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. There is shared responsibility across the whole church for a focus on racial justice in the vision and strategy work as the church seeks to become younger and more diverse. Within the Archbishops' Council the Racial Justice unit leads on this work, working closely with the Vision and Strategy team, the Ministry Development team and Education and Growing Faith. The Racial Justice unit supports a funding board distributing £20m of dedicated Racial Justice funding to networks, organisations and dioceses. The board monitors and evaluates the impact of this funding. The Vision and Strategy team supports the development of applications to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Board, and the monitoring and evaluating of previous SDF funding. These include aspects of the work to become younger and more diverse such as intercultural ministry in Leicester and Oxford dioceses and increasing diversity of leadership and reach in London and Sheffield. The Ministry Development team has dedicated resources and monitoring on ethnic

diversity, and the Education and Growing Faith team have pioneered a Leaders Like Us Programme. All these teams are due to meet with the Racial Justice Commission in the coming months to assess progress.

Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q149 The Response Group to the Wilkinson and Jay reports on safeguarding has summarised (in its Terms of Reference, paragraph 2.2) the scope of the Jay Review in the following terms: (i) To provide options and recommendations for forming an independent safeguarding scrutiny body for the Church of England; (ii) To make any recommendations for how further independence of safeguarding might be achieved; (iii) To make any other recommendations that are necessary or appropriate. However, in her report and the accompanying video, Professor Jay emphasises that she had not been given this scope, but only asked to explore how safeguarding practice could be independent, and not whether it should be. Which of these terms of reference is correct, who briefed Professor Jay on her terms of reference, and who has funded the work?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. Professor Jay's Terms of Reference were determined by both Archbishops and published on 20 July 2023 announcing the work Professor Jay was undertaking. They are available [here](#) but to help Synod I reproduce these below:

- To provide options and recommendations for forming an independent safeguarding scrutiny body for the Church of England
- To make any recommendations for how further independence of safeguarding might be achieved
- To make any other recommendations that are necessary or appropriate

Those were accordingly reflected in the Terms of Reference for the Response Group as mentioned in your question. The Church Commissioners agreed to meet the costs under their discretionary power to meet bishops' legal expenses and this allowed the work to begin immediately.

We are deeply thankful for the work Professor Jay completed - bringing a lifetime experience in this area of work and in particular building on the evidence she heard as Chair of the Independent Inquiry. As stated in the Terms of Reference, Professor Jay was simply asked to provide options for independence for various church bodies to consider and the Review Group have in GS 2364 provided an extremely detailed report and I look forward to hearing the views of General Synod later in this group of sessions.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q150 Given that one of the main findings of the recently published survey by the Church Army into the state of lay ministries across the CoE was that the leading obstacle perceived by Dioceses to the flourishing of lay ministries is clergy and the culture of clericalism, should the Archbishops' Council now conclude that the attaining of the 2nd cultural shift called for in the 'Setting God's People Free' Report (GS 2056 – and approved by Synod in February 2017) remains as 'unfinished business'? And, if so, will it commit to a concrete and focussed course of action to achieve the necessary shift on a sustainable basis?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The second cultural shift called for in the Setting God's People Free Report argues for the necessity that "laity and clergy are convinced, based on their baptismal mutuality, that they are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship, and equal partners in mission" in order to form Christian communities that can evangelise the nation (GS 2056).

The importance of lay-clergy mutuality is central to work in lay ministries and is modelled in the co-Chairing of the Lay Ministries Advisory Group by Canon Dr Paula Gooder and Bishop Sophie Jelley.

In July, Archbishops' Council will be discussing national priorities for lay ministries including the ongoing importance of both cultural shifts identified within *Setting God's People Free*.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q151 Bearing in mind that persons who take decisions at parish level as to the obtaining of DBS checks are not normally legally qualified, what action will the National Safeguarding Team and/or its legal advisers take to ensure that clear, robust and consistent advice is made readily available to such persons, both nationally and at diocesan level, (a) as to whether DBS checks (i) with standard disclosure and (ii) with enhanced disclosure may or must be obtained in respect of PCC members, merely by virtue of their holding that office, and the extent to which that may depend on the nature of the activities conducted under the auspices of the PCC concerned; and (b) that a person who applies for enhanced disclosure where the law does not authorise it commits a criminal offence?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Clear guidance on this subject is provided in [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](#) under [Elected Roles](#) and in more detail in the associated [Frequently Asked Questions](#) under "What level of DBS check should a person standing for election as a Churchwarden or as a member of the PCC have?" The National Safeguarding Team will draw this guidance to the attention of diocesan safeguarding advisers.

Mr Clive Scowen (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q152 Where an enhanced disclosure is lawfully obtained in respect of (i) a volunteer or (ii) an employee or (iii) a clerk in holy orders, whose role involves participation in regulated activities, has consideration been given to recommending or instructing that such a disclosure be registered so that it is continually updated and will not need to be applied for repeatedly at regular intervals? If so, to what conclusion did that consideration lead and why; if not why has that question not been considered?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance does refer to and recommend the Updates Service, however it is up to each individual whether they choose to register or not. The Updates service cannot be used for home-based positions if there is anyone else aged 16 years and over living or working at the applicant's home address. In addition, the Updates Service can only be used for checks at the same level and for the same workforce.

Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q153 Can the Archbishops' Council advise Synod how many individuals (complainants, survivors of abuse and those protesting about Church of England Safeguarding Processes) have received "cease and desist" letters from lawyers instructed by

and/or acting on behalf of the Secretariat at Church House, or on behalf of either Province so far during the life of this Synod?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Archbishops' Council takes very seriously its responsibilities towards its employees, and others who carry out its work, and will take action where required to ensure a safe working environment. It would not be appropriate to provide information about any cases where it has regrettably proved necessary to enter into legal correspondence in pursuit of this.

Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q154 Since the disbanding of the ISB last July, why has so little progress been made in reviewing the cases of the eleven survivors?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A GS Misc 1393, produced by the Interim Commissioner of independent reviews, sets out the work that has been undertaken and the latest position on progress.

Much of the delay is as a result of learning, through engagement with survivors, what additional provisions they required to be in place in order for reviews to proceed.

Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council:

Q155 The closure of the Independent Safeguarding Board was partly attributed by Archbishop's Council to an unsatisfactory completion rate of outstanding reviews. Can the Lead Bishop please advise Synod how many of the outstanding 11 reviews from that time have been a) completed and b) commenced during the intervening year?

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A GS Misc 1393, produced by the Interim Commissioner of independent reviews, sets out the work that has been undertaken and the latest position on progress. As he says, survivors have requested that their engagement is kept confidential, and he is therefore unable to provide confirmation of the status of individual case reviews.

The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q156 Given that the Archbishops' Council considered and approved the Annual Report and Accounts at the meeting on 19th March 2024 (as per GS Misc 1378), what differences are there between the version approved by Trustees in March, and that finally published on the 20th of June 2024 (GS 2362), and if none, then what is the reason for the considerable delay between approval by Trustees and wider publication to the General Synod and the whole Church?

Mrs Maureen Cole to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A As Mr Hamilton notes the Council approved its Annual Report and Accounts at its meeting on 19 March. This was a Word document without the images included within the front half of the report.

A designed version was subsequently prepared by the Communications Team alongside their other work. The only changes between the two documents are the inclusion of images and the correction of typographical errors identified in the design stage. It is this version, which was finalised in mid-June, that was published on the Church of England website on 20 June and will in due course be filed with the Charity Commission.

Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q157 What research has been done alongside collecting numbers on church attendance to determine age profiles in congregations, and changes in numbers due to those leaving to worship elsewhere, and deaths?

Mrs Alison Coulter to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Statistics for Mission data collection process captures Worshipping Community data including some information about congregational age distributions and movements. These data have been collected since 2013 - Some of the latest data can be found in the Statistics for Mission 2022 publication [found here](#).

The age categories in the Worshipping Community figures are broad (for most dioceses: people aged 0-10; people aged 11-17; people aged 18-69; people aged 70 and over). This is in part to avoid placing unreasonable data-collection burdens on the people asked to provide the information. Nevertheless, the available figures demonstrate some clear differences between dioceses and between churches.

While some information about Worshipping Community joiners and leavers is available, this has proved particularly challenging for churches to collect; the datasets are available to NCI and diocesan colleagues but need to be used with caution.

Obtaining detailed information about congregations requires a different approach. The Church Development Tool (CDT) (<http://cofe.io/cdt>) has been developed to support churches to better understand this data and support their congregations in discerning what support their congregation needs to grow in faith and discipleship.

The Data Services team are more than happy to work with Synod members to understand the data.

The Revd Will Pearson-Gee (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q158 What resources has the Church developed to help people think about and practise evangelism amongst men?

Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A A number of parachurch organisations have developed specific resources to help people think about and practice evangelism amongst men. Within the Church of England as we seek to be a church which represents the communities we serve in age and diversity; we recognise that in many churches men are underrepresented in the congregation, so the Council encourages dioceses to consider this as they develop their mission plans for future funding. We have recently developed a resource called Leading in Evangelism www.leadinginevangelism.org which was launched at July 2023 General Synod. This resource is entirely about enabling clergy and key lay leaders to work out what evangelism looks like in practice in their local setting, creating and sustaining a faith sharing culture. It will be useful in helping leaders to help the whole church think about and practise evangelism, including amongst men. We are open to ideas for future resources to enable local churches in evangelism.

The Revd Ruth Newton (Leeds) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q159 How is the net zero carbon programme helping parishes to fundraise for carbon reduction projects?

The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Net Zero Programme has been piloting a parish match funding campaign called *Give 2 Go Green* in both Leeds and Exeter Dioceses using the digital giving

platform. Under the campaign, the Programme pledges to match pound for pound monies raised locally to help deliver small scale net zero projects. 26 Churches participated in fundraising activity and initial findings from this first phase of the pilot are showing real promise.

The early indications are that the campaign is galvanising action within parishes and capturing the imagination of congregations and their wider communities to give generously to help achieve local net zero ambitions.

- The 26 churches have raised £163,550 in total
- 73% of the churches raised more than their target amount, some by 200%
- The Programme has awarded £142,341 awarded in match funding
- 9 of the churches were new to digital giving entirely.
- The second phase of the pilot is now live and running across 8 dioceses.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q160 Questions 155 and 156 at the November 2023 Synod raised by the Revd Aneal Appadoo and answered by Charlotte Cook on behalf of Archbishops' Council sought confirmation of a conflicts of interest policy comparable to those of other charities such as the National Trust and Oxfam; the questions resulted in an indicated aspiration to bring forward such a policy for the next Synod. Can you please confirmed if this has been actioned, if so where a draft can be found and if not, why not?

The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. The Council did discuss a draft Conflict of Interest Policy at its meeting in March. We agreed the policy subject to three points:

- Whether the proposed threshold for reporting gifts and hospitality at £50 was in line with comparable charities;
- Whether we needed to ask Council members additionally to declare where family members received income from the Church, for example as stipends, given that the Council has certain responsibilities in this area; and
- Whether the language on the declaration of interests could be simplified and ambiguities reduced.

We are consulting with our auditors on these points, and I hope we can sign off the final policy very soon.

In the meantime trustees continue to make an annual declaration of interests as part of the annual report and accounts, and the chair invites declarations of any new conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting. These are then handled appropriately including members withdrawing and/or not voting on particular items.

The Revd Preb Rosie Austin (Exeter) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q161 Given the budget deficit in several Dioceses and the pressures of maintaining ministry in rural areas, how can we sustain the idea that every person in England should have access to "an enriching and compelling community of faith"?

The Bishop of Portsmouth to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The beauty of the parish system is that every person in England is the responsibility of a church leader charged with the cure of souls in that parish. This is an idea and a responsibility that does not change. We must constantly reflect on what it means for each person to have access to such a community. That challenges us in terms of geography and diversity as well as the extent to which our local churches are enriching and compelling. Sadly, at present, in some places, it is not the case that

each person has access to such a community of faith. We will need to invest and reinvest- not just money, but prayer and time, lay and ordained, to be creative and to look at revitalising existing parishes as well as starting new worshipping communities to reach those who do not have access to an enriching and compelling community of faith now. In Portsmouth diocese, I am delighted by our investment in the renewal of ministry in the Isle of Wight which I hope will not only sustain the idea but enable each person on the island to have access to an enriching and compelling community of faith.

Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q162 The Labour Party manifesto has included a commitment to introduce a "Hillsborough Law" imposing a legal duty of openness and co-operation with public inquiries upon public bodies: has any provision been made within Archbishop's Council and/or the House of Bishops to discuss such a proposition and specifically to determine whether the Church of England would support such a law or seek an exemption from it?

The Archdeacon of London to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A The Archbishops' Council has not discussed such a proposition. It would do so only on the basis of a specific proposal brought forward by the Government. One important question would be the definition of public bodies. The Archbishops' Council has cooperated fully with relevant independent inquiries. One good recent example where we engaged and cooperated would be the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse.

Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q163 What research has been undertaken to examine the growth in the amount of bureaucracy in administering the business of the parish church and the apparent crisis in volunteering within the Church?

The Archdeacon of Liverpool to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Within the Transforming Effectiveness Programme, detailed research was carried out to identify ways in which growth in bureaucracy in administering the business of the parish church was affecting churches, and ways in which this could be simplified. As a result, *Simpler Support* offers to parishes have been developed including a free church administration tool. The display in the Exhibition area is available for members to find out more and pick up a *Simpler Support Pack* outlining all these services. Roadshows to help parishes access the new offers are taking place across dioceses. Further details of resources are available [here](#).

The [30K project](#), which seeks to raise up 30,000 new leaders of mission with children and young people, has conducted extensive research into volunteering, including learning from other organisations across the third sector. Working collaboratively with five dioceses and partners and focussing on recruiting volunteers to lead children and young people, a pilot resources campaign called "JOIN" was developed and later launched nationally to coincide with National Volunteers' week. This work will be showcased at a fringe meeting on Friday evening and can also be accessed via the website. [JOIN: Recruiting volunteers with children and young people | The Church of England](#).

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q164 Given the imbalance of in-depth information available to diocesan synods by which members must decide their vote, (four or five hours over two or three meetings a year compared to York's approaching 34 hours) what measures are being proposed to address this disparity and enable a more balanced and effective distribution of decision-making at diocesan level, given their key role of relaying central Church decisions to the deaneries and parishes and the realities of parish life back to the decision-making bodies of the Church, whilst also ensuring voting choices are well informed on such key issues as financial viability, stipendiary numbers, safeguarding compliance, upholding the Christian ethos and values in our church schools, meeting zero climate targets, keeping ancient buildings in good order, ensuring diversity of representation... the list is long?

The Revd Kate Wharton to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

A Thank you for your question. We have not received any requests, as far as I am aware, for any central intervention in the question of time allocated to discussion in diocesan Synods. The agenda and timing of diocesan Synods will be set according to the standing orders applicable in each diocese.

Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q165 Volunteer Human Rights Monitors on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme (EAPPI) which is supported by the Church of England are currently not allowed to enter Israel. Has the church made any representations about this?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as the Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:

A We are not aware of the restrictions on entry facing volunteers on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme. We will liaise with the World Council of Churches and seek to add our voice to whatever representation they are making to the Israeli Government as coordinators of this Programme.

Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:

Q166 The Lambeth Conference 2022 Call on Christian Unity re-affirmed a commitment to seeking the unity of Christ's body and set out a Call to Action. In January this year there was a call from the IARCCUM Bishops entitled Our Common Witness, Calling and Commitment. In commissioning the Bishops, Pope Francis intoned 'we send you forth, beloved co-workers for the kingdom of God, so that wherever you carry out your ministry, you may together bear witness to the hope that does not deceive and the unity for which our Saviour prayed', and the Archbishop of Canterbury responded with 'May your ministry alongside one another as Catholics and Anglicans be for the world a foretaste of the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ for which we pray this day'. Given the apparent importance attached to ecumenism and Christian unity, what are the reasons why support for ecumenical relations at Lambeth Palace and the NCIs has been so reduced and why does our Vision and Strategy, and our strategic funding streams, so neglect our work with our ecumenical partners in the outworking of Christian unity?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Joint President of the Archbishops' Council:

A Whether, and by how much, the ecumenical team has been reduced depends on where you count from. Prior to the Transforming Effectiveness exercise two years ago, the AC Ecumenical work was combined with work for FAOC, so the roles were not strictly comparable, and there was also a half-time ecumenical adviser on the Lambeth staff. Transforming Effectiveness aimed to reduce costs across all areas, but it also combined, where possible, support for the AC with the work supporting

the Archbishops. This has made our ecumenical work much more coherent. The current ecumenical team comprises two full time and one part time specialist staff, with administrative support. This is roughly one post smaller than before Transforming Effectiveness. The reduction is commensurate with staff reductions in most other areas, but with greater role clarity to compensate.

The suggestion that ecumenism is neglected in the thinking around Vision and Strategy and funding streams does not accord with my own impressions and I would be happy to hear from the questioner where he thinks we could do better, as no doubt we can.

HOUSE OF BISHOPS

Ms Helen Lamb (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q167 The Report from the House of Bishops Transparency Group (GS Misc 1387) is very welcome and clearly sets out a positive direction of travel. Noting the statement on p4 that “*Openness about what is being done, why and by whom contributes to a culture of trust within the Church of England*” a) What was the role of the Appointments Committee of the General Synod in selecting the members of the working group and what alternative means were used for any members of the group selected without their involvement? b) Are all members of the House of Bishops asked to approve the final versions of papers submitted to General Synod under their authority and if not, who takes editorial decisions on changes made subsequent to the version which was seen by the full House?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Thank you for your question and I am pleased the report set out in GS Misc 1387, seems to be producing a generally positive response. It has certainly felt a worthwhile piece of work. The Appointments Committee of the General Synod had no role in selecting the members of the working group. They were chosen by me because of their expertise and capacity to contribute to this work. This was a task-and-finish time-limited and temporary group with a specific focus to undertake before making recommendations to the House of Bishops.

Final versions of papers in the name of the House of Bishops are not approved by all members of the House of Bishops personally. As a rule, the relevant lead bishop will take the responsibility for ensuring that the paper reflects the steers and considerations of discussions in the House. This allows for a more streamlined and efficient governance model.

The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q168 As part of the ‘reset’ encouraging greater transparency, accountability and trust, when do the House of Bishops plan to publish minutes of HoB meeting from the last two years, and will there be any exceptions to this where minutes of certain meetings will not be published?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Thank you for your question. As set out at paragraph 14 on page 9 of GS Misc 1387 the House of Bishops made the decision not to publish minutes retrospectively. The new arrangements will mean that minutes will be published for meetings from May 2024.

The Revd Canon John Dunnett (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q169 What is the process for appointing an acting diocesan bishop when a diocesan See becomes vacant and what such appointments have been made over the last 10 years?

The Revd Tim Edwards (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q170 What is the process for appointing an acting bishop when a diocese becomes vacant and what such appointments have been made in the last 10 years?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission, I will answer questions 169 and 170 together.

The [Bishops \(Retirement\) Measure 1986](#) is the framework legislation for the resignation or retirement of bishops and sets out the legal process that should be followed when a bishop wishes to resign, retire or reaches the compulsory retirement age.

Diocesan Bishops are asked 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, early consultation with the 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.

Having done this, Diocesan Bishops need to consult their Diocesan Registrar and the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee to arrange for a delegation of authority instrument to be drawn up, under section 14 of the [Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007](#), in order to transfer power to a suffragan/assistant/other bishop, who will be looking after the Diocese during the interregnum.

Before the announcement of an Acting Diocesan Bishop, any required safeguarding checks are also completed.

The list of Acting Diocesan Bishops over the past 10 years is as follows:

Year of appointment	Vacant See	Acting Bishops
2015	Gloucester	+Martyn Snow (Bishop of Tewkesbury)
	Oxford (did not appoint)	+Colin Fletcher (Bishop of Dorchester)
	Newcastle	+Frank White (Assistant Bishop in Newcastle)
	Leicester	+John Holbrook (Bishop of Brixworth)
	Lichfield	+Clive Gregory (Bishop of Lichfield)
2016	Oxford (did not appoint in 2015)	+Colin Fletcher (Bishop of Dorchester)
	Sheffield	+Peter Burrows (Bishop of Doncaster)
2017	Sodor & Man	+ Richard Blackburn (Bishop of Warrington)
	London	+Pete Broadbent (Bishop of Willesden)
2018	Bristol	+Lee Rayfield (Bishop of Swindon)
	Truro	+Chris Goldsmith (Bishop of St Germans)
	Derby	+Jan McFarlane (Bishop of Repton)
2019	Norwich	+Alan Winton (Bishop of Thetford)
	Hereford	+Alastair Magowan (Bishop of Ludlow)
	York	+Paul Ferguson (Bishop of Whitby)

2020	Chester	+Keith Sinclair (Bishop of Birkenhead)
	Chelmsford	+Peter Hill (Bishop of Barking)
2021	Portsmouth	+Rob Wickham (Bishop of Edmonton)
	Salisbury	+Karen Gorham (Bishop of Sherborne)
2022	Rochester	+Simon Burton Jones (Bishop of Tonbridge)
	Bath & Wells	+Ruth Worsley (Bishop of Taunton)
	Liverpool	+Beverley Mason (Bishop of Warrington)
	Newcastle	+Mark Wroe (Bishop of Berwick)
	Blackburn	+Philip North (Bishop of Burnley)
2023	Lincoln	+Stephen Conway (Bishop of Ely)
	Winchester	+Debbie Sellin (Bishop of Southampton)
	Birmingham	+Anne Hollinghurst (Bishop of Aston)
	Peterborough	+John Holbrook (Bishop of Brixworth)
	Carlisle (did not appoint)	+Rob Saner-Haigh (Bishop of Penrith)
2024	Sodor & Man	+Mark Davies (Bishop of Middleton)
	Exeter	+Jackie Searle (Bishop of Crediton)
	Ely	+Dagmar Winter (Bishop of Huntingdon)
	Coventry	+Ruth Worsley (Bishop of Taunton)
	Truro	+Hugh Nelson (Bishop of St Germans)
	Durham	+Sarah Clark (Bishop of Jarrow)

Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q171 Noting that the House of Bishops have agreed to publish the minutes of their meetings, but recognising that there can be a long delay between a meeting being held and the draft minutes being approved and published, will the House of Bishops arrange to rapidly publish a summary of decisions made at their meetings pending the publication of the full minutes?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Thank you for your question. The transparency group are meeting again following this group of sessions and this issue is already on our radar and although I cannot of course predict the outcome of that discussion I am happy to take this proposal to that meeting and update General Synod accordingly.

The Revd Stuart Cradduck (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q172 Are there any plans to appoint disabled and/or neurodivergent people as Participant Observers on regional or national governance committees and councils or in the House of Bishops, in line with those which open opportunities for GMH/UKME people and women?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Thank you for your question which raises an important point about the full inclusion within the life of the church of those with disabilities and/or who are neurodiverse. The membership of some committees and councils will already contain within them those with disabilities or who are neurodiverse, whilst recognising that individuals may not always be comfortable in self-identifying as such and not every disability is visible. However, with the new Disability Project Group recently been established alongside the existing work of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People, your question enables me to invite them to reflect further on the matters you raise.

The Revd Folli Olokose (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q173 The debate on GS 2338 during the last group of sessions was inspiring, energising, and encouraging. I am particularly thankful to all who work within the RJU and those who support their work. The need for an Episcopal Lead in this vital area of our Church life and ministry was mentioned in the debate. Would the Archbishops be able to indicate their support for this request? If this is the case, what criteria would they have in mind, and have any of the Bishops been approached?

Mr Daniel Matovu (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q174 What if any consideration has the House of Bishops given to appointing a Lead Bishop for Racial Justice, just as it has appointed Lead Bishops to lead on matters which are regarded as meriting special attention such as Living in Love and Faith, Climate Change and Safeguarding, and, if so, what has it concluded, or, otherwise, if not, why has it not been considered?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A With permission, I will answer questions 173 and 174 together.

In May 2024, the Archbishops Council approved the idea of a Task Group comprised of members of the Archbishops' Council, CMEAC, ACRJ, and key stakeholders, to recommend a future governance structure to oversee the work of racial justice within the Church. The Task Group may wish to consider the option of recommending a lead bishop for racial justice. However, in practise whoever is the Bishop on CMEAC already acts as a de facto lead Bishop. The Archbishops with others, are waiting on the recommendations that will come from the task group which, as it happens, is meeting alongside another parallel piece of work about how we use, support, select and resource lead bishops more generally. The Archbishops strongly support work flowing out of the Racial Justice Commission and the *From Lament to Action* Report and look forward to the outworking of these next steps.

The Revd Lis Goddard (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q175 Over the last 20 years how many requests have been made each year by a bishop to be granted permission to serve beyond the age of 70 and how many of these have been granted and how many refused?

The Archbishop of Canterbury to reply as Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Thank you for your question. Records are not kept centrally on this area; therefore we have not been able to provide an accurate figure and certainly not one which reflects back 20 years. However, over the last 10 years our best recollection is of 6 extensions being granted with neither of the current Archbishops turning down any requests. Where extensions have been granted, they are usually for a limited amount of time and for a specific purpose which can range from a few weeks to a few months, and some are more time limited than the original request. It is worth noting that arrangements for extensions to suffragan bishops are usually dealt with by the diocesan bishop who then seeks the agreement of the relevant Archbishop.

Miss Rosemary Wilson (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q176 How many diocesan bishops and suffragan bishops are there currently in post, and how many of these in each category respectively are GME/UKME, and can you list them?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A There are 35 diocesan bishops currently in post and 66 suffragan bishops currently in post. Of these there is a total number of nine GME/UKME diocesan bishops

and/or suffragan bishops. We are unable to provide more detailed figures by category due to the need to anonymise the data.

We are not able to provide the names of the GME/UKME bishops because this is special category data and use of such data is restricted by the UK GDPR. Publication of the data is not possible.

Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q177 In answer to Question 169 in February, the Bishop of Leicester excluded the organisation “Don’t Divide Us”, despite its reputation, support, and experience, from contributing to the Church of England discussion on racial justice because they ‘contest the idea that Britain is systematically racist’. Given that prominent figures like Lord Tony Sewell also contest this claim, and given that no evidence has been offered to substantiate the claim that the Church of England is ‘deeply institutionally racist’, on what grounds has this been taken as a criterion for excluding them, and does that mean that no-one can be involved in working to address these issues if they also question this claim?

The Bishop of Leicester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A We have no desire to exclude ‘Don’t Divide Us’ from contributing to the Church of England’s discussions on racial justice. While the Church has taken a clear view on the reality of institutional racism and is acting against it, those with different perspectives but who are still committed to racial justice are welcome to be involved. The prior response from the House of Bishops lauded some aspects of their work.

The Archbishops, in response to Anti-Racism Taskforce Report *From Lament To Action*, stated categorically: “*Racism is a sin... There is no place for it in the world, and we are determined to make sure there is no room for it in the Church. But it is here. We have seen, time and time again, people being bullied, overlooked, undermined and excluded from the life of the Church, from the family of God. It breaks our hearts, and we are truly sorry*”.

The Ven Alan Jeans (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q178 Given the number of Armed Forces personnel currently serving in active operations, both overseas and from the UK, and in the light of the heightened tensions of global security in the world at present, what preparations are being made for the Church to respond to a major British Armed Forces military engagement?

The Bishop to the Armed Forces to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Recognising the current heightened global tensions, a working group made up of clergy, Forces personnel, chaplains and chaired by the Bishop to the Armed Forces is working on this issue. It is focussing on:

- Developing strong connections between parishes and military bases
- Equipping parishes to engage with service personnel and their families
- Working with church schools in which there are children of military families
- Establishing a group for bishops in dioceses with a significant military presence
- Equipping dioceses to work on contingency planning with Local Authorities and other partners
- Equipping church leaders at every level to think theologically and to speak clearly on issues of war and peace.

The Revd Steve Wilcox (York) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q179 I was encouraged and thankful to read (GS Misc 1377) that the House of Bishops recently discussed clergy wellbeing at length. When will General Synod and Dioceses hear more about what actions are being proposed, and will there be an opportunity to provide input into the emerging proposals?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The House of Bishops had a wide ranging exploration of the issues affecting clergy wellbeing on May 15th, 2024. The factors which contribute negatively and positively to wellbeing are complex and follow up work is at an early stage. This work will return to the House for further consideration before being shared more widely.

The Revd Joy Mawdesley (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q180 A recent survey by the Clergy Support Trust found one third of respondents did not trust their diocese to look after their well-being. What consideration has the House of Bishops given to this report, and what actions might they take to address the issue?

The Bishop of Chester to reply as on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A I believe the research in question was actually conducted by the Ministry Development Team with the support of the Ministry Council and not the Clergy Support Trust. This research was considered at the last meeting of the Ministry Council.

The House of Bishops places great importance on caring for the well-being of clergy and spent time exploring the complex issues involved at our meeting on May 15th 2024. Follow up work is at an early stage and will return to the House for further consideration in the coming months. However, we also acknowledge the element of trust between diocese and clergy in this question and note the report on trust and trustworthiness within the Church of England (GS 2354), which Synod is discussing on 5 July.

Mr Richard Denno (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q181 Canon C18.6 states: '6. Every bishop shall be faithful in admitting persons into holy orders and in celebrating the rite of confirmation as often and in as many places as shall be convenient, and shall provide, as much as in him lies, that in every place within his diocese there shall be sufficient priests to minister the word and sacraments to the people that are therein.' How has this principle informed decisions by members of the House of Bishops to reduce the number of stipendiary posts in their dioceses whilst retaining central diocesan posts?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Decisions on clergy deployment are made by dioceses rather than by the House of Bishops and so it is not possible for the House to answer the question directly. However, bishops are keenly aware of the need for priests (alongside other ministers, lay and ordained) and do all that they reasonably can to provide priestly ministry with the resources that are available to them.

We note the Ministry Team's vocations work in this regard in terms of national focus.

Mr Clive Billenness (Europe) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q182 Given that controversies about the apparently widespread use of Non-Disclosure Agreements within our Church continue to cause anxiety to congregations and to the wider public, can the House of Bishops institute a register in which all uses of

NDA's in legal settlements within Dioceses or National Church Institutions are recorded in order that anonymous statistical analyses can be performed?

The Bishop of Chester to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A No (although the question highlights an issue the House would recognise as Important). Specifically in response to this question: the House of Bishops is a deliberative and decision-making body. It is not equipped to monitor or maintain a register of contractual agreements involving confidentiality provisions. In any event, no meaningful statistics would be likely to be available from such data, given that the reasons for, and appropriateness of, using confidentiality provisions vary widely and depend on the circumstances of the particular case which would not be apparent from such a register.

The Revd Matt Beer (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q183 What is the House of Bishop's definition of a whole life disciple?

The Bishop of Dover to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishop:

A Much work has been done over the years on this definition – including in *Setting God's People Free* and *Developing Discipleship*. In brief, we can say that a whole-life disciple is one who recognises the call to live out the Good News of Jesus courageously in all of life, Sunday to Saturday.

The Archbishop of York developed this in his commentary on the 2020 Vision and Strategy for the Church of England:

"We are an apostolic church. God calls every one of us to be a missionary disciple ... we are called to gather around Jesus in worship, prayer and fellowship. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we are sent out by Jesus to be his witnesses and ambassadors in the world, drawing explicitly on the five marks of mission as the five marks of Christian discipleship".

It is significant that we often pray at the end of a communion service: 'Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory'.

Mrs Christiana Olomolaiye (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q184 Why does the Church of England not prioritise John 3.16 by inviting people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and become born again rather than just filling the pews and the electoral roll?

The Bishop of Dover to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Firstly, the Church of England provides many types of worship and opportunities for encounters with the Living God. Across those different traditions, language and practice will differ around *how* those encounters are described, encouraged and explained. For many, the language of being born again as a formative moment of repentance and commitment will be normal. For others, the journey of faith is a gradual one of wonder and grace, and small steps of greater commitment. For all of us, following and obeying Jesus Christ and receiving his love, forgiveness and guidance is a daily decision.

Secondly, attending church regularly does, of course, build faith in Christ. Being part of a community of believers and taking part in worship, prayer, the sacraments and exploration of the scriptures all contribute to growth as disciples.

Thirdly, opportunities to repent and turn to Christ are hard-wired into our liturgy, especially through Confession and Absolution. In the Creeds we declare our faith regularly and the Profession of Faith by godparents and candidates in Baptism and Confirmation are clear demonstrations of Trinitarian faith and of repentance and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Mrs Christiana Olomolaiye (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q185 How does the Church monitor genuine conversion to Christianity as distinct from routine confirmations of parishioners as part of Church practice?

The Bishop of Dover to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A My experience is that the majority of candidates for confirmation are there to express a definite commitment to be disciples of Christ. After all, each person who gets confirmed gives a public declaration that they turn to Christ as Lord and Saviour.

There are a number of proxy indicators we can measure that can show deepening commitment to Christ, such as increased:

- frequency of attendance
- giving
- volunteering for church roles and responsibilities
- vocations to lay and ordained ministries
- uptake of online discipleship offerings.

What's more, the Church Development Tool provides churches with questions they can ask to understand how their congregations relate to discipleship and faith. Example questions are:

- I can think of a time in the last month that God was active in my life.
- I know how my faith connects with everyday life.
- Being a Christian is one of the most important aspects of my identity.
- I feel a spiritual calling to work I do in my workplace/the community.

Dr Janette Allotey (Chester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q186 The preliminary report *Trust and Trustworthiness within the Church of England* (GS 2354) is to be welcomed. However, has consideration been given to the procedures of the General Synod and their implementation as factors in the possible undermining of trust within the Church of England?

The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A General Synod's manner of doing business and its relationship with other Church structures were subjects that arose in the interviews and discussions of the work that produced GS 2354. The causal relationship between institutional structures and procedures and our culture of trust or distrust is bidirectional; and, as paragraph 126 states, 'We can improve our structures, at regular intervals review and refine them, but this will only increase a culture of trust alongside the practising of good behaviours and practices we know to foster trust and trustworthiness.' Listening well, worshiping and serving together, safe spaces, accountable leadership and transparent decision making are a few examples of pertinent factors the report discusses.

Reviewing the standing orders of General Synod was out of scope of the work. The report is preliminary, and the take note debate on Friday 5 July is intended to hear from Synod what considerations it deems important factors in the undermining and fostering of trust and trustworthiness within the Church.

Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q187 As the work on the new structures of governance of the Boards and bodies reporting to the Archbishop's Council continues, as set out in GS 2360P (A) how many Boards, other bodies and Task Groups etc. is it envisaged will report directly

to CENS? (B) In the proposed composition of these subsidiary bodies how many places in total will be required to be filled by actual Trustees of CENS (whether a full voting member or with rights to attend and speak)? And (C) approximately how many of the other places on the proposed Boards and bodies will be directly elected from Synod, how many will be appointed by the Appointments Committee of General Synod and how many will be co-optable by the Board or body itself?

The Bishop of Guildford to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The draft Measure coming to Synod provides only for those few committees which require statutory authority. If Synod approve the Measure, the Archbishops Council will not exist and it will be for the new charity, Church of England National Services, to develop its own committee structure. In GS 2360P an illustrative structure is provided to suggest how this might work in practice. In developing that illustration, the Programme Board was clear that the list of committees was not exhaustive and therefore sought to develop principles by which committees should be developed, which includes representation of the Synod within committees established. These are set out at paragraph 56 on page 20 of GS 2360P.

Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q188 In GS 2360, (National Church Governance Report and Recommendations) the Project Board has called for the many bodies involved in the governance of the Church of England to review and justify their method of working, so as to improve the effectiveness of strategy and accountability but also to restore trust through greater transparency and scrutiny. What steps are being envisaged to guard such scrutiny from procedural delay, escalating bureaucracy and cost, or further complicating the relationship between central governance and parish with its focus on furthering the mission of the Church in myriad practical ways?

The Bishop of Guildford to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The draft Measure would establish Church of England National Services and sets out its charitable purpose, focused on actions that are intended to serve, support, encourage and enable the work and mission of the whole Church. Its trustees, a majority of whom will be members of the General Synod, will have a duty to ensure that the charity fulfils this purpose. The proposed governance framework has been aligned to charitable best practice and incorporates structures that would enable new ways of working, particularly in the relationship between General Synod and the trustee bodies. The draft Measure proposes new scrutiny mechanisms, which provide for regular, constructive engagement with the National Church Institutions. The scrutiny mechanisms have been carefully structured to avoid increased bureaucracy, with a focus on building a culture of greater openness, where trust can be gradually built through regular engagement and learning lessons together. The trustee bodies have voted to support these proposals. If Synod is content that the draft Measure proceeds to Revision, this will allow proper time to review and consider these proposals. The framework is set out in the Measure, but it is the way we work together that will help shape and improve our governance.

Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q189 Given the requirement of the 2021 Cathedrals Measure for bishops to appoint an interim dean at a cathedral within 30 days of the post becoming vacant, has the House of Bishops given consideration to updating the 2016 document on the Appointment of Cathedral Deans, to ensure that due regard is given to the possible compromise of the appointment process when there is an incumbent interim dean, and if not will it do so now?

The Bishop of Bristol to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Since 2021 of 21 Deans appointed, 5 have been the interim Dean.

We do not believe the integrity of the appointment process is affected by the consideration of an interim incumbent and remain confident that appointment panels faithfully discern the correct person for each role taking into account all the information made available to them through a thorough appointment process, which makes use of professional HR tools in the context of discernment.

Nonetheless, following a period of unprecedented activity in the appointment of cathedral Deans, the Archbishops' Advisers for Appointments and Vocations will be reflecting with key stakeholders on all aspects of the appointment process with a view to recommending any changes deemed necessary.

The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q190 Under Canon B 43.3(1)(b), what sanction should be applied (and by whom) to an incumbent that hires out a parish church to an independent church not on the designated list? When was such a sanction last applied?

The Bishop of Bristol to reply on behalf of the Chair of House of Bishops:

A Paragraph 3(1)(b) of Canon B 43 (of Ecumenical Relations) provides for members of a designated church (i.e. a church designated by the archbishops or the diocesan bishop) to use a parish church or cathedral church for worship in accordance with the forms of the service and practice of the designated Church. It is also possible for parish churches to be used for worship by other, non-designated churches, where a lease or licence authorised by faculty has been granted for that purpose. There are no legal provisions specifically concerned with the enforcement of the law in this area. Any concerns which cannot be resolved in the parish can be raised with archdeacon who will, where appropriate, obtain legal advice from the diocesan registrar as to any steps that might be taken in relation to enforcement.

Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q191 The House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (GS Misc 1076) states "Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England."

In the light of recent calls that a "way be found to bring the Declaration and its arrangements to an end" (WATCH Nov 2023), and in the interests of upholding the Five Guiding Principles and ensuring mutual flourishing for all, (as per GS Misc 1076), what measures are being taken to ensure that all members, including new members of Synod, are fully aware of and uphold The Five Guiding Principles and GS Misc 1076?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As part of the induction for members in November 2021, all General Synod members were sent a copy of the House of Bishops' Declaration as part of their induction pack, and a copy of the Declaration can be found on the Members' Resources page of the website (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/general-synod/synod-members-resources>). When new members join the General Synod,

they are signposted to the members' resources page which includes the Declaration.

The House of Bishops' Standing Commission on the Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles has begun a piece of work around telling the story to the 2014 Declaration in order to ensure continued awareness of the Declaration, especially for those who were not on Synod in the period to 2014 and any other new readers. This will include a factual document, reflections from those involved in the journey to the final Declaration, and more online resources on the Declaration and the work of the Standing Commission to supplement the information already on the Church of England website (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/general-synod/structure/house-bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops-and-priests>).

Mr Andrew Farley (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q192 Which liturgies have the House of Bishops commended despite the bishops being advised that such liturgies are indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England?

The Bishop Lichfield to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Canon B 5 makes reference to 'forms of service' rather than 'liturgies'. Canon B 1 makes it clear that the expression 'form of service' should be understood to include 'any ... matter to be used as part of a service'.

The House of Bishops on occasion commends material for use by the minister in exercise of his or her discretion under Canon B 5. That Canon (at para 2) indicates: 'All ... forms of service used under this Canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.'

Commendation does not confer a formal status, but it does mean that the House of Bishops has concluded that the material is capable of meeting this test.

The Revd Neil Barber (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q193 What guidance has the Church of England developed and issued on how to share the good news of Jesus with other faiths including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and how to welcome, support, and encourage those who convert?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The key resources for guidance for the Church of England on the mission of evangelism and other religions can be found among the various reports and guidelines under the Mission and Ministry in a Multi-Religious Society section of the Church of England's website. This is known as the "Presence and Engagement" project, renewed at General Synod in 2017, and includes "Sharing the Gospel of Salvation" the still valid 2010 report on the subject of evangelism and other religions. As well as the guidelines on witness and evangelism amongst other faith traditions as part of our wider mission, there is signposting to the national network of Diocesan Inter Faith Advisers who can provide important advice responsive to context.

Mrs Alianore Smith (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops (?):

Q194 The Scottish Episcopal Church has a canon which states "The College of Bishops may authorise the use for a defined experimental period of other services" (Canon 22) than those authorised by its General Synod. Does the House of Bishops in the Church of England have any similar authority?

The Bishop of Lichfield to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Canon B 5A provides that the archbishops may authorise a form of service for experimental use, before submitting it to the General Synod for approval under Canon B 2, 'after consultation with the House of Bishops'. There is no provision for the House of Bishops collectively to authorize forms of service, whether experimentally or otherwise; but it is a long-standing practice for the House of Bishops to commend forms of service for use by the minister in exercise of his or her discretion under Canon B 5.

The Revd Angela Hannafin (Leeds) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q195 How can members of the Church of England find out about progress being made by the net zero carbon programme?

The Bishop of Norwich to reply on behalf of Chair of the House of Bishop:

A A regular programme of content to inspire, inform, raise awareness and report on key milestones has been planned by the Net Zero Programme team to ensure key stakeholders are informed about the progress being made.

A monthly Church of England Environment Bulletin was launched late 2023 and this includes a key section on the Net Zero Programme and its progress. Members can subscribe to this through our website here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/sign-our-environment-newsletter>

Regular updates are provided for the Bishops Newsletter and also sent to Diocese Communications teams to disseminate news through their local newsletters and other channels.

A new blog section ([Environment Blog | The Church of England](#)) on the Church of England website, which focuses on environment stories, will also host regular updates and inspiring case studies from the Net Zero Programme. New stories will be promoted and signposted via social media and newsletters.

A Net Zero Impact Report will also be published each year to take a look back over key achievements and progress being made by the Net Zero Programme, with links to milestones achieved from the Routemap. And some of this information will also be re-purposed into smaller, bite-size graphics and short videos and promoted in newsletters and social media.

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q196 In answer to my questions 40 and 41 at the July Synod seeking an independent Review into the controversies at Christ Church Oxford you [the Archbishop of York] responded:

"We hope, in the near future, to be in a position to consult all interested parties on a proposed way forward. Synod members will understand that we should consult all of the interested parties first before making further details public...it is my strong view and my consistent view that it is in everyone's best interests and to everyone's benefit – obviously especially Martyn Percy himself – that an independent review takes place of the issues and concerns that have been raised and I look forward to that happening." [See Report of Proceedings, July 2023, pages 80-82].

Accepting entirely the good faith of that expressed commitment, can you please make enquiries and set out with particularity the extent to which that promise of consultation was actually delivered in practice?

The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:

A As Synod will be aware, a review group was formed to oversee an independent review into the handling of alleged safeguarding issues involving the former Dean of Christ Church Oxford. Its terms of reference and membership can be found at the link [here](#).

The Group consulted extensively with interested parties. Whilst some progress was made, it became clear that it was not possible for all parties to reach the necessary level of agreement to allow the review to proceed. Accordingly the review group suspended its work. This is deeply regrettable as it leaves various voices unheard, many of whom would welcome a review on the lines that was suggested. For ease I have reproduced the latest statement from the review group below.

“The review group overseeing the independent review into the handling of alleged safeguarding issues regarding the former Dean of Christ Church, Oxford has announced that it is suspending its work. The Safeguarding Practice Review was announced in November and commissioned by the Archbishops’ Council and Oxford Diocese. Members of the review group were to consider evidence relating to the alleged safeguarding issues with a view to appointing and instructing an independent reviewer with relevant expertise and experience. That has been unable to happen despite the efforts of the review group members. This has meant no further progress can be made on the review. Stakeholders have been informed of this development and support offered.”

It will now be for the Archbishops’ Council and Oxford Diocese to consider any next steps.

Mrs Jane Rosam (Rochester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q197 When do the House of Bishops expect to publish a report of the findings of the investigation by former Superintendent Susan Barnsley into the complaints arising from the report by Professor David Glasgow that the group of survivors known as “the ISB 11” suffered “significant harm” as a result of disregarding the advice of former ISB Member Steve Reeves about how the closure of the ISB should be announced?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Susan Barnsley was commissioned to conduct a Safeguarding investigation in line with the Church of England managing allegation policy [responding-pg-v2.pdf](#) ([churchofengland.org](#)). The safeguarding report is an internal document to assist the core group in deciding whether there is a case to answer. This is a confidential report and will not be published.

Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q198 Where faith issues are addressed in the concluding section of “The Future of Safeguarding in the Church”, Professor Jay writes “we also heard frequent references to the need for safeguarding in the church to be rooted in Theology or Scripture. As a basis for decision making on allegations or concerns about adult protection this is inappropriate and does not reflect statutory guidance.”

What consideration has the House of Bishops given to whether it is appropriate for Christian theology, derived as it is from Holy Scripture, to provide the cultural foundations upon which the approach to Safeguarding in the Church, is formed?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A How - rather than if - Christian theology, grounded in Scripture, should shape the Church's approach to safeguarding continues to be the subject of careful thought

and reflection. Professor Jay's words about the inappropriateness of rooting safeguarding in Christian theology refer narrowly to procedural matters related to handling specific allegations and concerns. To accept her judgment on that matter would not, therefore, be to say that Scriptural and theological reflection should have no bearing on shaping the culture and approach of the Church of England. Accordingly, in the few months since the Jay report was received and the Synod motion passed, the Church's ongoing discernment about the future of church safeguarding has been informed by theological and ecclesiological consultation and reasoning (as reflected in Appendix E to GS 2364). In addition, a 'Theology of Safeguarding' group, comprising a number of theologians (including members of the Faith and Order Commission), practitioners, and survivors is available for the Bishops to consult on how Christian theology can continue to shape the Church's ongoing response. As is true in every area of theological work, a careful hermeneutic methodology that takes into account the historical human context of the Scriptures as well as their divine inspiration, is necessary for responsible application of the Bible's wisdom and direction to our own current contexts. The House of Bishops universally affirms that safeguarding is a properly Christian concern precisely because of the teaching of Scripture, not in spite of it, and will continue unapologetically to think distinctively Christianly about our corporate responsibility to ensure that the Church is safe for all.

The Revd Canon Alice Kemp (Bristol) to ask Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q199 Are there any plans to produce Safeguarding training resources in languages other than English and in formats that are accessible to people who have learning disabilities?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Basic Awareness and Foundation modules will be available this year in a Plain English format and in British Sign Language. All other pathways which will be revised in 2024 will be updated to follow a Plain English approach. Unfortunately, those pathways which are delivered locally either via Zoom or in-person are often amended to fit the local context in which they are being delivered and therefore translation into other languages would need to be completed at a local level.

Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q200 Will the Lead Bishop for Safeguarding confirm whether the amended terms of reference for the Makin Review include a requirement for the Reviewer to investigate and report on the extent of active liaison and cooperation, if any, between the Church of England and the authorities of the Anglican Church in South Africa during John Smyth's lifetime following the 2013 report of his crimes?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Terms of Reference for the Makin review have not changed since their publication in 2019. The Terms of Reference clearly set out the scope of the review [.tor-john-smyth.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#) The actions taken by the Church of England in 2013 and following are in scope for the review.

The Revd Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q201 The Safeguarding Leadership Training provided to dioceses by the National Safeguarding Team now focuses quite heavily on a concept which is described by the acronym 'Social GRRRAACCEESSS'. This seems to have been lifted from a 2014 paper on self-reflexivity 'on issues of difference' for psychotherapists and has its roots in post-modern notions of identity and intersectionality. When and why was

this concept introduced into Safeguarding Leadership Training, what is its relevance to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and what is its Scriptural basis?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The concept of the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS (Gender, Geography, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Culture, Class/Cast, Education, Employment, Ethnicity, Spirituality, Sexuality and Sexual orientation) is used in modern systemic safeguarding practice, it does not have a scriptural basis. The mnemonic GRRRAACCEEESSS proposes that, as individuals, we are a sum of parts, a sum of certain visible and invisible characteristics which in given contexts afford us power and privilege. When responding within a safeguarding context it is important that we are aware of how we are perceived by others and equally, how we perceive individuals. Survivors across differing contexts all too often reference the fact that they feel they are seen not as individuals but, as a part of a homogenous group. The SGs ensure we pay attention to both visible and invisible characteristics that shape our experiences of the world. It is an alternative means of exploring our unconscious biases.

The Safeguarding Senior Leadership Training which was delivered between 2021 and 2023 had material regarding the 'Social GRRRAACCEEESSS' as a means of exploring how culture is set within senior leadership teams. This material has filtered down into the Safeguarding Leadership Pathway and has been present within that since 2023.

Mrs Kat Alldread (Derby) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q202 What is the current projected date for the publication of the Makin Review?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The reviewer is nearing the end of the representation stage for those individuals and organisations who are named and criticised in the report, allowing them an opportunity to comment on the extracts which are relevant to them. Once the responses have been received the reviewer will consider how any amendments arising from this are to be made. The reviewer has stated that he is unlikely to hand over the final report to the Archbishops' Council until the end of the summer. Once the report has been received a publication date will be set, which takes into consideration allowing victims and survivors who have contributed to the report time to read the report prior to publication.

Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops

Q203 To what extent, if any, did the Response Group engage with Professor Alexis Jay and Dr Sarah Wilkinson both during and at the conclusion of drafting report GS 2364; if none, please explain how Synod is to take into account the views of its most recent informed independent scrutineers?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A I was grateful that Professor Jay met with me shortly after February's General Synod. This was a private meeting, where we discussed her recommendations and the process we had begun to plan how best to respond to her and Dr Wilkinson's recommendations.

Both Professor Jay's and Dr Wilkinson's recommendations were clearly outlined in their reports, and we have worked from those papers while compiling GS 2364.

Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q204 How much of the £300k financial budget made available to the Jay Review Response Group has been spent to date?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A At the end of May 2024 (the most recent complete month) a total of £81,600 had been incurred in respect of Jay Response Group costs.

Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q205 The website [https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-programme notes](https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-programme-notes), on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, that 'The work of IICSA has concluded in October 2022, and final report has further recommendations that relate to the work of the Church of England' ... 'The National Safeguarding Team are reviewing the recommendations and will be responding how these will be addressed in due course'. What progress has been made on this work since October 2022?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Working Group on the Seal of the Confessional has presented an initial report to the House of Bishops for consideration, and it will return to the House of Bishops in the Autumn for decision. The original Government proposal on Mandatory Reporting is currently on hold due to the General Election. Separately, the NST and relevant colleagues were engaged in discussions with the Home Office about Mandatory Reporting before the election was called and will continue to do so when a new proposal is brought forward.

In terms of the DBS regime, updated requirements were issued as part of the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance in 2021, and this is due to be refreshed early next year. The guidance contains details on how to refer individuals to the DBS barring lists, and a series of workshops was run at the time.

The Learning and Development Framework 2021 (revised version before the General Synod in July 2024) outlines the requirements for mandatory and recommended training for people in paid, unpaid, licensed and lay roles. In addition, the National Safeguarding Standards (2024), which are drawn from good practice and policy expectations outlines an expectation for adoption of safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q206 How long before the publication of the Makin Review will UK victims of the Smyth cult be given publication copies in order to prepare themselves?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The planning for the publication of the Makin review has commenced which includes liaison with our advocacy service to ensure that victims and survivors who have contributed to the review have sufficient time to read the review prior to publication, with access to support service.

Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q207 In November 2023 Question 185 Carolyn Graham expressed concern that the Makin Report was then over 1250 days late; given that it has still not been delivered, does the amount of time to be devoted to his task remain entirely within his personal discretion?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The National Safeguarding Team have worked with Keith Makin to ensure that he has additional resources available to assist with this review. This offer of additional support has been in place for some time. The reviewer has welcomed this support and has accessed this as needed.

Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q208 How many people are currently employed in the National Safeguarding Team, in what roles, and how many of these are employed full-time?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The Archbishops' Council's 2024 budget contains provision for 63.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff posts within the National Safeguarding Team (NST).

55 of these posts are for full-time employees with a further 16 staff budgeted on a part-time basis.

The above totals include 28.8 FTE posts held within a 'core NST' split across various teams: Directorate, Development, Casework, Partnerships, Business Support, Interim Support Scheme Administration and specialist HR & Communications support.

The remaining 35.0 FTE posts form part of the 'NST Programme' as resource for various time-bound projects: IICSA 1&8, Casework Management System, Redress Scheme and a Programme Management Office.

The Revd Canon Mark Bennet (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q209 Given the timescale involved in implementing independent safeguarding structures for the Church of England, what measures are planned in the interim at the level of the National Safeguarding Team, for example to improve the safeguarding culture of the church, ensure better engagement with survivors and improve the support given to diocesan safeguarding teams?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A The National Safeguarding Team is devising a 3-year strategic plan to help us focus on the key areas, including key performance indicators. We have adopted the National Safeguarding Standards as part of this work, which covers the key areas raised in this question. We have also continued to work on the IICSA 1-8 recommendations, and we are starting to see the benefits of this area of work. The NST and others agree that the important work we have started must continue until a decision has been made about the future of Safeguarding in the Church.

The Revd Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEIs) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q210 Since 2018, I have been asking questions in Synod about how the learning from Lessons Learned Reviews (LLRs) such as Gibb on Ball (2017), Robson on Griffin (2022), Cooper on Stowe and Maids Moreton (2022), as well as multiple references in the IICSA hearings (2018-2019) – all of which made a connection between discriminatory policies and attitudes towards LGBT+ people and cases of catastrophic safeguarding failures – can be incorporated into the Church of England's safeguarding work and the work of LLF. Last year I produced a [paper](#) drawing together these references from LLRs and IICSA and presented it to the National Safeguarding Steering Group at the invitation of the Lead Bishop in January 2024. When I asked about this again in February 2024 (Q157), the Lead Bishop reported: 'The NST will continue its thematic monitoring of all LLRs, paying attention to this theme and will do further learning and development work as

priorities and resources permit. The Theology and Safeguarding Group will also be asked to review the paper and suggest further work, in coordination with the LLF team’.

Given that GS2370 ‘Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework 2024’ presented to this Synod, states that ‘unhealthy cultures’ includes ‘secrecy about sexuality ... [which] increase the likelihood of abuse taking place’ (p. 11), would the Lead Bishop update us on the ‘further learning and development work’ from these thematic reviews, not only by the NST but the Theology and Safeguarding Group and the LLF team?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A When developing training programmes, we consider the learning coming from prominent reports nationally and, where appropriate, locally. Work is ongoing to publish a document which outlines our Learning and Improvement Framework.

Safeguarding learning and development integrate a commitment to a safe Church for all with up-to-date learning, including through learning lessons from reviews and reports. In relation to the area of sexuality, the learning here is increasingly open and dialogical. This is born out of understanding that unchallenged silence and secrecy around unhealthy behaviours have the potential to create unhealthy environments within which abuse can readily grow. We train against attitudes that serve to cloak abusive behaviours under the guise of taboo subjects. Differing perspectives on sexuality are not permitted to obscure required safeguarding action.

This learning is evidenced through the clear links made in our senior leadership training: using models of social graces; the content, video, and discussions in our Survivors Brief Symposiums; LGBT+ and safeguarding materials in our safeguarding virtual library; learning principles and LLF materials used to inform L&D. We have a strong commitment to good safeguarding for all.

The Theology and Safeguarding group have endorsed the current work on LGBT+ themes in LLRs.

Mr Andrew Cornes (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:

Q211 Last July Synod passed a motion including the call to make it part of the brief for every Diocesan Safeguarding Team swiftly to welcome offenders after release into an appropriate church community, subject to agreed and clear safeguarding boundaries. Has this specific requirement now been added widely to Diocesan Safeguarding Teams’ briefs, and is there evidence that ex-offenders are now being more swiftly welcomed into appropriate churches?

The Bishop of Stepney to reply on behalf of the Chair of the House of Bishops:

A Kashmir Garton on behalf of His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service developed guidance for Probation Services in terms of contacting dioceses to support safe access to worship. This guidance has been promoted in the NST weekly Newsletter, as well as via an in-person workshop delivered by Kashmir Garton at the Safeguarding Advisers Day on 01 November 2023. Plans are in place to deliver this again in November 2024, to ensure those who were unable to access the workshop in 2023, have a further opportunity to learn. The approach to engaging offenders in a Safety Plan post release, is also covered in Managing Allegations Safeguarding Code of Practice due to come to Synod in February 2025.

Currently there is no data available to evidence how swiftly offenders have been welcomed into a church community.

SECRETARY GENERAL

The Revd Christopher Blunt (Chester) to ask the Secretary General:

Q212 When was the last exploration of possible alternative venues for February Synod in place of meeting in London, and what was the evaluation of the comparative cost, including the total cost of travel and accommodation for Synod members?

Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:

A In the spring of 2021, an exercise was undertaken to look into alternative venues for General Synod meetings. This took into consideration the overall cost of Synod meetings, including estimates of venue hire, audio visual equipment and resourcing. The cost of travel and accommodation for Synod members is information held at diocesan level and therefore could only be estimated for the purpose of this exercise.

On completion of this piece of work, having taken into account the full, and estimated, costs for holding a Synod meeting, the Business Committee assessed that no alternative venue had met the criteria required to host Synod and was as competitively priced as Church House Westminster. As part of the charitable purposes of the Corporation of Church House, meeting space for General Synod is provided free of charge. In 2021, in comparison with other venues, this was a saving of over £300,000.

CLERK TO THE SYNOD

Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

Q213 Although I remember hearing it said when the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was being implemented that the names and contact details of Synod members should continue to be publicly available once it had come into effect due to the public nature of those roles, the closest guidance that I can find online is the advice within Frequently Asked Questions about 'Parishes and the GDPR' on the Parish Resources website that it is still permitted for church tea and coffee rotas to be displayed in church because this considered to be a 'legitimate interest', not requiring the consent of those listed.

Can the names and contact details of members of deanery or diocesan synods or General Synod similarly be made publicly available without requiring the members' consent - for legitimate interest reasons? If so, is there a limit on which details can be made available, such as members' email addresses but not postal addresses?

Jenny Jacobs to reply as Clerk to the Synod:

A Certain General Synod membership details are already made public by law (legal obligation), as stated in the Privacy Notice:

"1(c) We compile the 'List of Synod members' booklet for distribution to other General Synod members, this contains your name, House, Synod number, Diocese/constituency, and email address. Your name, Diocese and constituency are also included in the Church of England Yearbook which acts as both a public register and a historical record of Synod membership."

Publication of deanery, diocesan synod membership, and contact details requires a justifiable purpose, so there needs to be an explanation of why the wider public need to have these contact details. Once this has been established, the relevant data required to meet this purpose must be identified, on the basis that only necessary data should be published (data minimisation), and these two decisions will determine the lawful basis.

Legitimate interests, or other lawful basis, is only suitable if the processing is necessary to achieve the purpose. If not, then consent is the only appropriate lawful basis.

ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Jonathan Baird (Salisbury) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q214 Since the last Triennial Funding Working Group allocated in 2022 funding for the current triennium (2023 to 2025), the financial condition of the Church has become more challenging, and more dioceses have fallen into deficit.

Consequently, in allocating funding for the next triennium (2026 to 2028), will the next Triennial Funding Working Group reprioritise funding streams in order to meet current needs?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of The Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A The Terms of Reference for the Triennium Funding Working Group which will be tasked with developing recommendations on spending plans for the 2026-2028 triennium for the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners' Board to consider will be drafted for the trustee bodies to consider by the autumn. I assure Mr Baird that it is my assumption the Group will look at prioritising of funding streams in the light of the current needs and opportunities and that I will be advocating strongly for this.

The Revd Lis Goddard (London) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q215 The cost of carers in the NCI expense policy is a maximum of £7.80 per hour whereas the minimum wage is £11.44, so together with pension and NI, the expected cost of a carer is at least $£11.44 \times 1.03 \times 1.138 = £13.41$. Is there a reason for the difference?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council:

A I am grateful to Lis Goddard and another Synod member for bringing this to our attention. I have agreed with the staff recommendation that the maximum rate should be increased with immediate effect to the Living Wage Foundation rate (£13.15 per hour in London and £12 per hour outside London). The overnight and weekend rates will be increased by the same percentage.

Staff will investigate the origin of the £7.80 hourly rate, which it seems has not been updated for several years and consider if any other changes should be made.

Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q216 Please provide Synod with a table showing for the whole Church of England, and for each diocese: the weekly average planned giving per regular giver, the number of planned givers and Usual Sunday Attendance of adults.

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A A table with the requested figures is below

Diocese	Weekly average planned giving per regular giver (£, 2022)	Number of planned givers (2022)	Usual Sunday Attendance (2022)
Bath & Wells	15.00	11,900	14,300
Birmingham	19.00	6,300	9,400

Blackburn	12.30	10,700	13,300
Bristol	20.00	6,400	9,100
Canterbury	14.50	7,200	9,800
Carlisle	11.20	6,500	6,800
Chelmsford	17.10	14,000	21,000
Chester	16.50	13,500	16,400
Chichester	16.90	16,700	23,000
Coventry	15.40	6,500	8,900
Derby	14.60	5,900	8,400
Durham	10.90	7,000	8,000
Ely	19.60	7,000	11,200
Exeter	14.10	10,800	15,400
Gloucester	15.80	8,100	10,700
Guildford	22.80	11,800	13,900
Hereford	9.40	4,900	6,400
Leeds	13.40	15,900	20,500
Leicester	11.50	7,600	8,500
Lichfield	11.30	13,500	16,700
Lincoln	9.10	7,400	10,800
Liverpool	13.30	8,700	12,200
London	28.10	24,900	43,400
Manchester	12.70	10,000	14,000
Newcastle	11.10	5,800	7,300
Norwich	12.00	7,800	13,000
Oxford	20.50	23,700	32,000
Peterborough	14.20	7,500	9,700
Portsmouth	15.20	5,400	7,400
Rochester	17.80	10,300	13,600
Salisbury	13.50	13,300	17,800
Sheffield	19.10	5,700	9,400
Sodor & Man	17.10	500	900
Southwark	21.60	17,500	25,200
Southwell & Nottingham	12.70	9,100	9,700
St Albans	17.60	13,400	16,300
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	12.60	6,900	10,400
Truro	11.10	4,200	6,700
Winchester	18.10	10,700	14,600
Worcester	14.20	5,400	7,300
York	12.30	10,500	15,300
Europe	<----Data not available---->		7,900
Published Total	16.20	400,900	556,600

Mr Andrew Orange (Winchester) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q217 Could consideration be given to allowing parishes to apply directly to the Archbishops' Council for project funding, and employing a small, dedicated team at Church House to evaluate those applications, by reference to pre-defined criteria? Dioceses would be kept informed, but the process would be direct to parishes. The purpose would be to grant money with minimal 'process', to be managed directly by local volunteers and enthusiasts who can see the good possibilities clearer than the dioceses who are at one remove?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

A The general policy is for national Church grants to be made to dioceses. However, there have been exceptions such as the Cathedral and Major Churches grants scheme in 2020-21 which was part of the Heritage Stimulus element of the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund.

It is possible a grant stream direct to parishes might be considered for a specific purpose, although it would normally be directed through dioceses such as the £15m energy support costs grants made in 2022. Personally, I would be concerned that a grant scheme that invited applications from the over 12,000 parishes that we have would involve disproportion cost at national Church level and in volunteer time, especially if demand meant that a significant proportion of applicants were ultimately unsuccessful. This was a key reason why the Archbishops' Council agreed to change the use of its Church and Community Fund from grants to parishes to reducing the diocesan apportionment some years ago.

The Ven Stewart Fyfe (Carlisle) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:

Q218 What is the overall cost to Dioceses, since the creation of SMMIB, in compiling and writing bids for funding under the DIP and other grant-based funding streams (such as Posts of First Responsibility, Additional Curate posts, Net zero housing demonstrators, Growing Faith Hub pilot and other such pilot schemes)?

Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee

A We do not have any data on the cost of diocesan staff time spent in compiling and writing proposals for the Diocesan Investment Programme since the Strategic Mission and Ministry Board was established last year. The Diocesan Investment Programme incorporates additional curates' posts and several other prior streams into a single fund and a single stage process therefore reducing the number of separate applications required. This is intended to reduce the costs for dioceses and the National Church. Dioceses are asked to share mission, people and financial plans as part of their application.

Applications for Net Zero and Growing Faith hubs are separate specialist processes, and we do not have data on the cost to dioceses and/or parishes of developing those proposals.

STRATEGIC MISSION AND MINISTRY INVESTMENT BOARD

The Revd Sue Lucas (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

Q219 Dioceses have a duty to pay clergy stipends (and associated costs), despite not enjoying any guaranteed means of meeting those costs through parish share or other income. What evidence does the Archbishops' Council have to show that the current balance between funding which supports ministry and growth within our existing parishes (such as the LInC Grant), and funding which supports new growth opportunities outside parishes, is both missionally effective and financially sustainable?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

A As GS Misc 1384 notes, we are currently reviewing in detail how national funding can best support both missional effectiveness and financial sustainability. I intend to provide Synod with an update on this work next February before bringing our longer term funding plans to Synod next July.

One key aim of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment funding is to revitalise parishes. One element of this funding, the Diocesan Investment Programme, invests in change and growth both in existing parishes and new churches, to multiply fruitful and sustainable ministry. Lowest Income Communities Funding underpins ministry in the most deprived areas, often alongside Diocesan Investment Programme funding to grow mission and ministry in these communities.

The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

Q220 The Statement of Needs for the next bishop of Durham stated: 'The Diocese has 207 parishes (169 benefices) with 258 churches, of these a third have a usual Sunday attendance of fewer than 20. Modelling has suggested that at recent rates of congregation decline fewer than 100 churches are likely to have 20 or more gathering for Sunday worship by 2029.' Which dioceses have done similar modelling looking five years ahead, and what impact is that likely to have on the numbers of diocesan central staff and senior posts (archdeacons, suffragans, and diocesan bishops) over this timeframe?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

A We do not know which dioceses have undertaken such modelling, but I can see that it may be insightful for different types of planning. The national church supports dioceses with different contextual analysis of their attendance data for their strategic planning, to understand how best to reverse long-term decline. Durham is not the only diocese where such figures may apply – indeed in more rural dioceses the number may be even more extreme, as has become clear from aspects of the Diocesan Finances Review.

Different dioceses may respond to such a prediction in different ways. The SMMI Board has supported dioceses who invest in the Vision and Strategy in order to grow the Church and avoid such a position. In some places that has meant more posts such as archdeacons who support clergy in mission and wellbeing, or support for benefices which manage a significant number of church buildings. We will be taking these matters into account as we formulate our financial plans for the next triennium.

Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

Q221 The Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board's Annual Report for 2023, GS Misc 1383, estimates on page 24 between 16,000 and 27,000 'people newly participating in different church gatherings' backed by Strategic Development Funding. (The variation is explained in the margin by different methods of estimating the number of participants attracted from other churches, which are excluded from the total of "new participants".) Are these "gatherings" the same as the '900-1,000 new worshipping communities' earlier on the page; and what was the total number of new participants expected or hoped for these projects when they were approved for funding?

Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:

A No, the gatherings mentioned are not the same as the 900-1,000 new worshipping communities, as the number of new participants includes those who have joined existing services at parish churches, as a result of the funding.

Each project has specific contextual aims which are the primary way which effectiveness is assessed. It should be noted that not every project had a figure recorded for one or both of new worshipping communities and new participants.

The exercise identified new participants data for projects where the total hoped for number was 75,680. At the time of the exercise, these projects had drawn down 60% of their funding. Plans expect outcomes to take time to be fully realised after funding is drawn down.