

GENERAL SYNOD

SIXTY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

The Standing Orders Committee has considered amendments to the Standing Orders concerning the Crown Nominations Commission. The Committee is of the view that the proposed amendments as drafted would achieve the intended effect.

1. The Standing Orders Committee ("the Committee") presents its sixty-fifth report to the Synod.
2. The Committee's membership is as follows:

Appointed members:

The Revd Canon Joyce Jones (Chair) (Leeds)
 Mr Clive Scowen (London)
 The Revd Treena Larkin (Lichfield)
 The Revd Susan Lucas (Chelmsford)
 Mrs Karen Czapiewski (Gloucester)

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall KC (Manchester) was a member until his recent death

Ex-officio members:

The Ven Luke Miller (Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury)
 The Revd Kate Wharton (Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of York)
 Dr Jamie Harrison (Chair of the House of Laity)
 Mrs Alison Coulter (Vice-Chair of the House of Laity).

Proposals concerning the Crown Nominations Commission

3. A set of proposals for the amendment of the Standing Orders concerning the membership, chairing, business and procedure of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) are due to be considered by the General Synod at the February 2025 group of sessions. Some have been brought forward at the request of the House of Bishops (marked "(+)" in the lists below); others are proposed collectively by the central members of the CNC.
4. The proposed amendments would:
 - 1) enable the other member of a pair to attend a meeting of the CNC if the member serving for the vacancy in question is unable to attend;
 - 2) provide for deputies of the Archbishops' and Prime Minister's secretaries for appointments to attend meetings of the CNC;
 - 3) provide for an interpreter to be invited to attend a meeting of the CNC where a member needed such assistance;
 - 4) ensure that where the see of an archbishop is vacant, the other archbishop can exercise the power to appoint a bishop to act as deputy for the absent archbishop;

- 5) provide, on a temporary basis, for the case where neither archbishop is present to preside at a meeting of the CNC by enabling the bishop appointed as deputy for the archbishop of the province with the vacancy to preside;
 - 6) change the position so that the required threshold is calculated by reference to the number of voting members of the CNC who actually cast a vote; an abstention would no longer be counted, in effect, as a vote against a candidate (+);
 - 7) change the threshold required for submitting a name to the Prime Minister from two-thirds to 60% (+);
 - 8) replace the requirement for a secret ballot with a requirement for a counted vote on a show of hands (+);
 - 9) give the person presiding a second vote where only two candidates remained under consideration and neither had reached the required threshold for selection (+).
5. It is the Committee's duty under Standing Order 40(1) to submit to the Synod a written report or comment on any motion included on an agenda or notice paper for the amendment of Standing Orders.
 6. The Committee has considered the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders set out in the Annex to this report that are intended to give effect to the proposals set out above. The Committee is of the view that the proposed amendments would be effective to bring about the changes that are proposed.

Joyce Jones
Chair

January 2025

ANNEX

AMENDMENTS RELATING TO CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION

Standing Order 137 Crown Nominations Commission: membership

1. In Standing Order 137, after paragraph (3CA) insert--

“(3CB) If the member of a pair serving under paragraph (3A) for the consideration of a vacancy is unable to attend a meeting of the Commission at which the vacancy is under consideration, the other member of the pair may attend the meeting in that member’s place.”

Explanation: *This amendment would enable the other member of a pair to attend a meeting of the Crown Nominations Commission if the member who was serving for the vacancy in question was unable to attend.*

2. In Standing Order 137, after paragraph (6) insert—

“(7) In these Standing Orders, a reference to the Prime Minister’s Secretary for Appointments or to the Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments includes a reference to a person acting as deputy for the holder of that office.”

Explanation: *This amendment would enable deputies to be substituted for the Appointments Secretaries.*

3. In Standing Order 137(4), in paragraph (4)(b), at the end insert “or the need for an interpreter”.

Explanation: *This amendment would allow the Commission to invite the attendance of an interpreter where a member needed such assistance (for example, because a member’s limited English meant that the member could not otherwise participate satisfactorily).*

4. In Standing Order 137, for paragraph (5) substitute—

“(5) If one of the Presidents will be absent from a meeting of the Commission, that President may nominate a member of the House of Bishops from that President’s Province as a deputy with full voting rights; but if such absence arises because the archiepiscopal see of a President is vacant, the other President may make the nomination (with the deputy being a member of the House of Bishops from the Province with the vacant archiepiscopal see).”

Explanation: *This amendment ensures that where the see of an archbishop is vacant, the other archbishop can exercise the power to appoint a bishop to act as deputy for the absent archbishop.*

Standing Order 138 Crown Nominations Commission: Chair

5.—(1) In Standing Order 138, for paragraph (5) substitute—

“(5) In the absence of both Archbishops, the Archbishop required to preside by paragraph (2) or, in the event of that Archbishop’s incapacity or a vacancy in the see of that Archbishop, the other Archbishop may direct that the member of the House of Bishops nominated under SO 137(5) for the province in which an appointment is being considered is to preside.”

(2) This amendment ceases to have effect on 14 February 2026 (and accordingly, paragraph (5) of Standing Order 138, in the form it took immediately before this amendment had effect, is then revived).

Explanation: *This temporary amendment is concerned with the case where neither archbishop is present to preside at a meeting of the Commission. An archbishop would be able to direct that the member of the House of Bishops nominated under Standing Order 137(5) as deputy of the archbishop of the relevant province was to preside at the meeting.*

Standing Order 141 Crown Nominations Commission: business and procedure

6. In paragraph (6) of Standing Order 141—

(1) after “unless” insert “each voting member who is serving for the Commission’s consideration of the vacancy has been afforded the opportunity to cast a vote for or against the submission of that name and”;

(2) for the words from “the total number” to “in question” substitute “the number of members who cast a vote”.

Explanation: *This amendment would prevent an abstention from being counted as, in effect, a vote against a candidate. Instead, the threshold would be calculated by reference only to the number of votes actually cast for and against a candidate; an abstention would be ignored in determining whether an individual had the necessary level of support.*

7. In paragraph (6) of Standing Order 141, for “two-thirds” substitute “60%”.

Explanation: *This amendment would change the threshold required for submitting a name to the Prime Minister from two-thirds to 60%.*

8. In paragraph (6) of Standing Order 141, for “in a secret ballot” substitute “on a show of hands which must be counted by the Secretary of the Commission”

Explanation: *This amendment would replace the requirement for a secret ballot with a requirement for a counted vote to be taken on a show of hands.*

9. After paragraph (6) of Standing Order 141 insert—

“(6ZA) But if no more than two candidates are or remain under consideration for selection and, after three successive rounds of voting in respect of only those candidates, none has received the level of support required under paragraph (6), the person presiding at the meeting may cast a second vote in favour of such of those candidates as he or she thinks fit.

(6ZB) Where the person presiding at the meeting casts a second vote in favour of a candidate under paragraph (6ZA), that vote is to be added to the number of votes cast in favour of that candidate; and if, on a recount of the votes, the result is that the candidate then has the level of support required under paragraph (6), the name of that candidate becomes the name selected for submission to the Prime Minister.

(6ZC) On a recount of the votes under paragraph (6ZB), for the purposes of ascertaining the level of support required under paragraph (6), the person presiding is to be counted as one member who casts a vote (despite having cast a second vote).”

Explanation: *This amendment would give the person presiding at the relevant meeting of the Commission a second vote where no more than two candidates remained under consideration and no candidate had received the required level of support after three rounds of voting.*