

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**February 2025**  
**QUESTIONS**

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

The Business Committee has scheduled 75 minutes for Questions at the February 2025 Group of Sessions of the General Synod. Notice has been given of 155 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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## CLERK TO THE SYNOD

### Q1 Mr Stephen Hogg (Leeds) to ask the Clerk to the Synod:

When Synod members incur expenses in their memberships of and attendance at committees, their expenses are processed by CHECS. There have been significant delays in processing, taking three weeks at times. Within what time period can members expect their expenses, having been approved, to be reimbursed?

*Jenny Jacobs to reply as Clerk to the Synod:*

**A** The expenses policy sets out that these should be processed by the Financial Processing Team within five days of receipt of a correctly authorised claim and paid by BACS credit on the next available weekly payment run.

It is important that expense claims are completed fully, and any incomplete forms can lead to a delay in processing. Currently we only run BACS each Wednesday which means that any expenses processed for payment on a Thursday are held until the following Wednesday to be paid by BACS. It can then take 2-3 days to clear the member's bank account. Therefore, it can take between 5 and 15 working

days from the submission of a fully approved and completed expense claim to the date of payment.

We understand that this timeline is excessive, and staff are looking at possible solutions to reduce the delay, including considering a second BACS payment on either a Monday or Friday of each week to minimise delays, or possibly making expense payments above a certain threshold payable by a 'same day payment'.

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:**

**Q2** Paragraph 60 of the newly published 52 report of the Central Stipends Authority (GS Misc 1399) explains the decision to increase the National Minimum Stipend by 5% but the National Stipend Benchmark (relevant to clergy of incumbent status) by 3% in April 2025. One effect of this is that the NSB will remain further behind recent inflation than NMS. Until now NSB has been fixed at 10% above NMS, and therefore the national policy on stipends (see note below\*), whilst referring only to NMS, has in practice applied to NSB as well. Paragraph 60 states that the gap between NMS and NSB 'could be narrowed for one year', but also that 'different percentage increases' are 'not envisaged' in future. Please can this be clarified? Is the intention to restore the differential to 10%, and if so, is there a target date?

\*Note: the policy is quoted as follows in paragraph 59 of the Central Stipends Authority's report GS Misc 1399:

'that the NMS should in future, on average over the medium term, increase in line with inflation, as measured by CPIH, subject to review every three years and the need to review this position if high levels of inflation establish themselves'.

### *Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee:*

**A** The Generosity and Sacrifice review of clergy stipends (2001) recommended that the National Stipends Benchmark (NSB) be set at 1.1 times the National Minimum Stipend (NMS). Since then, the gap has varied from year to year with different percentage increases being adopted for the NMS and NSB in some years, and different dioceses adopting different stipend levels. The NSB has not been 10% above the NMS since 2010.

Increasing the NMS by more than the NSB in 2025 enabled a greater increase in the starting value of pensions from April 2026 as well as helping clergy on lower stipends, including many curates.

The NSB is not binding, and dioceses that can afford to pay more are able to do so.

As set out in GS2380, it is recommended that a National Standard Incumbent Stipend of £34k is introduced from 2026 and that the NMS is increased to £32.5k to catch up with inflation from 2011, which would retain the current differential.

### **Miss Debbie Buggs (London) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:**

**Q3** Given the comment in GS 2380 (Update on Diocesan Finances Review) that "Half of dioceses face some short-term liquidity risk" - what consideration has been given by the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee to the potential requirement to be

a 'lender of last resort'/'emergency liquidity provider' to Dioceses, and with what outcome (if any) or with what changes to the liquidity or reserves policy of the Archbishops' Council?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee:*

**A** Diocesan Boards of Finance (DBFs) are independent charities and so DBF trustees have collective responsibility for financial management including budget setting and monitoring, and ensuring adequate funds are available to settle bills as they fall due. Trustees also have a responsibility to act quickly, having taken any necessary expert advice as early as possible, if there is a significant deterioration in their charity's financial situation.

In recent years, the Archbishops' Council has paid the full year's Lowest Income Communities and Transition Funding grants to recipient dioceses in January to bolster cashflow. In addition, dioceses can request up to three months forbearance on their Clergy Stipends Accounts.

The Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board would consider requests for grant funding to help improve a diocese's mission and financial strength. Any other requests for assisting a diocese which faced an imminent liquidity risk would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It is not within the Council's trustee responsibilities to be a 'lender of last resort,' However, with the assistance of dioceses, the Council and its Finance Committee does undertake some monitoring of the financial position of dioceses to identify emerging challenges and risks to inform any discussions.

**Mr Clive Billenness (Europe) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:**

**Q4** Can you please provide the total budget allocated to be paid to abuse survivors by the Interim Support Scheme in 2023, 2024 and 2025?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee:*

**A** The budget for Interim Support Scheme (ISS) grants in the three years is as follows:

2023: £750,000

2024: £750,000

2025: £400,000

The Council's 2025 budget was reviewed by the General Synod last July following approval by the Council trustees in May.

The 2025 budget for the ISS – which is designed to address immediate and urgent needs that help in the short-term to put the survivor's life back on track - was set at a lower level than the previous year in the expectation that requests for support would reduce following the introduction of the redress scheme.

At the time the planning assumption was that the Synodical stages for the Abuse Redress Measure might be completed in February 2025. Now that it is clear this will not happen before July 2025, forecast expenditure on ISS grants in 2025 is at the 2024 budget level of £750,000. (Grants awarded in 2024 were £725,508).

**The Ven Catherine Dobson (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee:**

**Q5** The table of parochial fees for the forthcoming year is published each year in November. Most weddings are booked at least a year in advance and the late

publishing creates uncertainty as clergy are unable to confirm the fees at the time the wedding is booked.

Would it be possible for the fees to be set 12 months before they apply, so November 2025 setting for 2026 and 2027, and then onwards Nov 2026 setting fees for 2028?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Finance Committee:*

**A** Parochial fees for 2026 will be governed by the Parochial Fees Order 2024. This states that from 1 January 2026 fees will increase by the lower of (i) the annual increase in the CPI inflation index to August 2025 and (ii) 5%. In previous Parochial Fees Orders the reference point was the September CPI which should enable the table of parochial fees to be produced slightly earlier.

When preparing the next draft Parochial Fees Order, we will consider whether to propose an earlier reference month for the increase. But a balance will need to be struck between a desire for early notification of fees for the coming year and there not being too great a time lag compared with the prevailing inflation rate.

When the next draft Parochial Fees Order is debated (which, subject to the Business Committee's approval is likely to be next February) Synod members may propose alternatives including a different reference month for any inflationary increases.

## **STRATEGIC MISSION AND MINISTRY INVESTMENT BOARD**

**The Revd Canon Howard Stoker (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:**

**Q6** Given the increasing burden of administration on parish clergy, would the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners welcome and fund requests from Dioceses, as part of their mission strategy, to provide financial support to pay for parish administration in Benefices where income streams are financially strained, in order to release parish clergy for mission within their context?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:*

**A** There are examples of administration being supported as part of strategic mission programmes funded through the national Church's Diocesan Investment Programme. Such funding is, of course, awarded in line with the purpose of the Diocesan Investment Programme rather than providing general support across all parishes. An example is the Growing Rural Churches programme in Winchester diocese which is providing support for benefices in the programme for a range of areas as needed, including centralised benefice or parish administration and improved IT, with the express purpose of freeing up time for mission.

**Mr Robert McNeil-Wilson (Gloucester) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:**

**Q7** What was the current annual cost of management and administration of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:*

**A** The Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) Board, as a voluntary Board, only has annual expenses of £15,000. The staff support to administer the



distribution of SMMI funding, and to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements e.g. Charity Commission compliance, is £347,500 annually.

This cost is approximately 0.09% of the monies under management (£387m) as of December 2024. This figure is the aggregate of all new SMMI awards, plus awards made under the previous national funding (SDF/STF) that are still active but excludes Lowest Income Community Funding (LInC). These costs are hard to directly compare with other grant-making organisations, but are extremely low in terms of industry standards.

**Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:**

**Q8** Since 2023 SMMIB has distributed and monitored funds made available by the Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council to help churches reach more people with the good news of the Gospel.

What criteria, if any, might render a parish ineligible to apply for SMMIB funding?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:*

**A** Parishes do not apply directly to the SMMIB for funding and the SMMIB does not, therefore, set criteria for their eligibility. It is up to dioceses to decide which parishes to target for investment in their proposals to the SMMIB for funding.

**Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:**

**Q9** Is a Diocese's use or otherwise of Total Return Accounting for its Diocesan Stipend Fund taken into consideration when evaluating bids for SMMIB funding, and if not, would consideration be given to adding this factor as a way of encouraging Dioceses to make the most of the financial resources available to them before calling on the central resources of the Church?

*Mr Carl Hughes to reply as Chair of the Archbishops' Council's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board:*

**A** Thank you for this suggestion and yes, we will consider the implications of adding this as a factor as we work through the implications of the Triennium Funding Working Group's decisions.

Some initial thoughts would be that while there are benefits to taking a Total Return approach to accounting, it is a decision that should not be made lightly and, whilst we would encourage DBF trustees to consider this approach, we would not want to put an inappropriate degree of pressure on them to adopt it. The national Church role is to ensure dioceses are aware of the option and to provide some informal guidance, but DBF trustees are required to take their own specialist advice when considering if the Total Return approach is in the best interests of their charity.

We work with dioceses submitting proposals to the SMMIB to understand their financial plans. Importantly this is not a tick-box exercise but is built on partnership. There are many different ways that dioceses may grow in mission and financial sustainability.

## **COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

**Mrs Catherine Butcher (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:**

**Q10** Are there plans, and is there budget provision, to encourage local churches and our dioceses to work in unity with other denominations to make Jesus known as Jesus prayed in John 17.23?

*The Bishop of Fulham to reply as Chair of the Council for Christian Unity:*

**A** Working with other denominations at local level to spread the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a vital part of the Church of England's ecumenical work, both at local level, and through our various regional and national partnerships. The Council for Christian Unity affirms, following John 17.20-23, that unity and mission belong together. It is crucial that we work in partnership as much as possible; our divisions damage our mission. Central resources may be made available, but specific needs have to be identified and submitted through the usual budgetary processes, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the way the Church's resources are used.

## **CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL**

**Canon Robert Perry (Truro) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:**

**Q11** What steps is the Council taking (a) to dissuade His Majesty's Government from making any further changes to the Listed Places of Worship Scheme whereby qualifying churches may recover the VAT payable on certain categories of repair and maintenance work and (b) to persuade HMG to reverse the reduction in funding recently announced?

*The Revd Sue Lucas to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:*

**A** The Cathedral and Church Buildings Department continues working closely with partners across denominations and other faiths, and with the historic religious buildings and wider heritage sectors, to argue for the importance of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. The complete ending of the scheme was a possibility, and we feel we have had a stronger voice through this collective advocacy. Our joint focus now moves to making the case to government for longer-term VAT relief for repairs, and for capital funding for repairs, to listed places of worship. We will do this in our responses to the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the Culture, and Media and Sport Select Committee's Protecting Built Heritage inquiry, and as we gather evidence on the impact of the cap that has been imposed on claims under the Scheme. This is likely particularly to affect cathedrals and Major Churches but also any place of worship facing a once-in-a-generation major repairs project.

**Mr Nic Tall (Bath & Wells) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:**

**Q12** While the Lead Bishops on Church and Cathedral Buildings have rightly welcomed the 12 month extension on the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme, announced by the government on 22 January, what plans are in place and what discussions are planned with government, MPs and heritage partners with regards to dealing with the funding cuts in the scheme and the annual limit on support available which will nearly halve financial support from this source?

*The Revd Sue Lucas to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:*

- A** The Cathedral and Church Buildings Department continues working closely with partners across denominations and other faiths, and with the historic religious buildings and wider heritage sectors, to monitor the impact of the capping of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and to present this evidence to government. We accept that, historically, most claims under the scheme were below the cap, but many routine programmes of repair to cathedrals and Major Churches buildings, or a significant repair project to a church of any size, would easily exceed this figure. We will continue working with funding bodies such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund to understand the consequences for grant-aided projects in progress and how these may be mitigated. We will continue to make the case to government for longer-term VAT relief for repairs, and for capital funding for repairs, to listed places of worship, in our responses to the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's Protecting Built Heritage inquiry.

**Miss Elizabeth Olsen (Chester) to ask the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:**

- Q13** In the contexts of the national Church being cash poor but asset rich and local churches struggling financially - where that a particular church wishes to sell certain valuable assets for which it has no use, in order to use the proceeds for much needed outreach to further the Gospel – are there published rules or guidance concerning what assets may be sold for the purpose of furthering the Gospel and if so, what are they?

*The Revd Sue Lucas to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Church Buildings Council:*

- A** The Church Buildings Council strongly encourages churches to see valuable assets as part of the riches that they bring to the community and to enjoy and celebrate them. Moveable goods of the church belong to the parishioners at large, with the churchwardens acting as custodians on their behalf. These assets are part of the history of the parish and the community it serves. The Council has a conservation grants programme to support PCCs care for their historic furnishings.

Valuable assets belong in our churches, and should only be removed in exceptional circumstances. Churchwardens are temporary custodians of our buildings, and we have a duty of care to our generation and those to come. They can allow parishioners and visitors to see museum-quality objects on their doorstep.

There is a strong presumption against sale, and for a faculty permitting sale of a church treasure, it is necessary to demonstrate grounds that are sufficiently compelling to outweigh this. Financial need would seldom on its own outweigh the strong presumption against sale. The Church Buildings Council offers further guidance on this matter in its guidance on Disposal and Loans on the Church of England website.

## **MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

- Q14** The Church of England's vision to be a younger, humbler and bolder church can be realised by tapping into the energy, commitment and passion for Christ. Given this is the case, what could be the pathways for these prospective young leaders?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

**A** Our national vision and strategy, commits to being younger and more diverse. This specifically includes those called to lay and ordained leadership within the church. We are glad to see many well-run local initiatives (such as ‘Discipleship Years’ or community opportunities) and diocesan programmes (such as the leadership development programmes for children and young people in London or Southwell & Nottingham, both of which have secured national funding).

We continue to invest in the Ministry Experience Scheme. MES has enabled over 900 young adults over the last 12 years to explore ministry and to develop as leaders by taking a year out and working within local churches across the country.

Alongside this the 30k Project is planning to create programmes in partnership with the National Society for Education to develop 3000 young leaders over the next triennium. This will include leadership development in church and school contexts, including the further growth of FLOURISH worshipping communities in schools/colleges following its current pilot with 12 Dioceses, and the increased representation of younger voices at Synod following the July 2024 motion.

**The Revd Prebendary Dr Christopher Moore (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

**Q15** Where Ministry Experience Schemes receive central funds, are they required to pay those who participate the minimum wage or are those who participate expected to volunteer their time so that they do not qualify for the national minimum wage under the terms of National Minimum Wage Act 1998?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

**A** Administration of each local Ministry Experience Scheme is the responsibility of the diocese, however, the Ministry Development Team have recently taken advice on this matter and a working group has been tasked with developing a clear policy which will be shared with dioceses in due course.

Preliminary legal advice confirms that MES participants are likely to be either volunteers or voluntary workers (subject to how any given diocesan MES is set up), and as such participants are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage.

**Mr Robin Hall (Europe) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

**Q16** The loss of Freedom of Movement following Brexit has been particularly difficult for the Diocese in Europe, not least for young people who were previously offered the opportunity to spend up to a year with one of our chaplaincies, which is now limited to three months. What representations have been made – or could be made – to HM Government to explain the importance of youth mobility for young people in the church and to encourage UK membership of the EU Youth Mobility Scheme?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

**A** No advocacy or representations have been made specifically in relation to the Ministry Experience Scheme. The broader issue has come up repeatedly as part of the Bishop of Leeds’ enquiry into the Church and the Future of Europe. So far HMG have been reluctant to grant any concessions on immigration policy. The public and political mood is complex and dynamic, and the timing of any future representations would need to take account of that.

**The Revd Prebendary Dr Christopher Moore (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

**Q17** How many people entered training for stipendiary ministry in 2024 who were: a) in their twenties; b) in their thirties; and c) in their forties?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

**A** The details requested are as follows:

20s: 35 people

30s: 68 people

40s: 60 people

(There were also 16 people entering training as potentially exercising incumbent focus ministry where the diocese has not stated whether ministry will be exercised)

**Canon Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

**Q18** What were the numbers of male and female clergy in each diocese in the years ending December 2023 and December 2024, 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 years ending December 2023 and December 2024, grouped by role and age?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

**A** This information is not currently available (due to the implementation of improved data systems), but it is important and will update previously published figures.

Our Data Services team, responsible for the People System where this data is now stored, is in the process of creating the necessary reports. Once these reports are completed and thoroughly verified, we will share the requested information.

**The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TEs) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

**Q19** Periodic External Reviews (PERs) are an essential component in delivering quality assurance for our TEs in partnership with the University of Durham, the validator of the Common Awards. It is important to avoid any conflicts of interest between the TEI and the PER team (normally a team of four people). A recent revision of the *Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Ministerial Formation: A Guide for Reviewers and Training Institutions* (Nov 2024) amended the guidance on conflict of interest from the previous Handbook (Oct 2022) to add the phrase (in italics): 'M[inistry] D[evelopment] T[eam] (and Durham) will appoint review team members, consult the TEI to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest **or other legitimate concerns**, confirm the dates with the TEI and review team, and arrange training and briefing for reviewers (para 5.11)'.  
**or other legitimate concerns**

Would the Chair of the Ministry Development Board inform Synod of the criteria that are used to define 'other legitimate concerns' since the introduction into the *QAE Guidance* of such an imprecise and open-ended formulation without clear criteria could be open to misuse and undermine the diversity of PER teams?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

- A** In practice TEIs have previously made comments about the composition of a proposed review team for various reasons, not just conflict of interest, and these have been assessed on their own merit. Whether a concern raised is legitimate would be assessed by Ministry Development Team staff. While TEIs have a right to make comment on suggested reviewers, this enables the TEI to ask for further factors to be considered before the team is finalised; the TEI does not have a right of veto over reviewers, and all decisions remain with the Ministry Development Team, who in this are responsible to and may take advice from the Ministry Development Board's Advisory Group for Initial Ministerial Formation. The Handbook states explicitly that the review team will 'represent a diversity of background, experience and church traditions', and we seek to ensure the process is one in which the whole church can have confidence.

**Mr Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

- Q20** It sometimes happens that for good personal reasons curates in training may have to move from one diocese to another.

Is it possible then for the funding from the ordaining diocese for the curate's stipend to be transferred to the new diocese so they can continue their IME 4-7 pathway. And would you know of any cases where such an arrangement has taken place?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

- A** Most training curacies are funded from the diocese's own resources, and it would therefore be up to the diocese concerned whether it wished to continue to provide funding towards the stipend were the curate to move to another diocese. Where national funding was supporting some of the cost, this will have been given for curacies in the particular diocese but a request to vary this for good reason would be considered sympathetically. Since any such arrangement would be made between dioceses, there would not normally be any national awareness if one had taken place.

**Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough) to ask the Chair of the Ministry Development Board:**

- Q21** What progress has been made on bringing about the cultural change identified in the *Setting God's People Free* reports as necessary for closer and more constructive engagement between clergy and laity; and who is responsible for monitoring progress on this?

*The Bishop of Chester to reply as Chair of the Ministry Development Board:*

- A** We are grateful for this question and encourage Synod members to continue to play their part in being the answer locally. Mutuality and constructive engagement between clergy and laity remains both necessary and a work in progress within the church at every level. This mutuality lies at the heart of the lay ministry strategy that was approved by the Ministry Development Board and Archbishops' Council and all resourcing is being assessed against that strategy.

Measuring cultural shifts quantifiably is difficult, but supporting mutuality remains an important priority embedded across the work of the national ministry team in supporting the mission and ministry of the wider church. This includes the formation frameworks for Clergy and Readers/LLMs, pilot clergy CME programmes and the national priorities for supporting lay ministries across the Church of England. Further support has also been put in place within the Vision and Strategy team.

## **NATIONAL SOCIETY COUNCIL**

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

**Q22** Has the Church of England recommended to the Government initiated Review of the Curriculum in Schools that there should be no change in the legal requirements relating to Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and Locally Agreed Syllabus Conferences which at present guarantee that the Church of England, other Christian Denominations and other Faiths have a decisive influence on the content of Local Authority Agreed Syllabuses for Religious Education?

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

**A** Details of the National Society's submission to the Curriculum and Assessment review can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/national-society-calls-long-term-curriculum-and-assessment-reform-support-educational-equity-and>.

It covers a wide range of issues including a call for the strengthening of the quality and status of Religious Education (RE) through the implementation of a National Content Standard and reimagined assessment frameworks. We recognise that there are over 100 different locally agreed syllabi, along with the curricula from MATs and free schools, and that RE suffers from the lack of a statutory national benchmark, leading to inconsistent teaching, expectations, and pupil outcomes. We propose embedding the National Content Standard for RE into legislation, so that it becomes a shared language and set of expectations for every school, whilst preserving the essential space for local context, and faith foundation (where it exists) to feed into the provision of high quality, pluralistic, up-to-date RE for all.

## **COMMITTEE FOR THE MINISTRY OF AND AMONG DEAF AND DISABLED PEOPLE**

### **The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:**

**Q23** What progress has been made since the Disability Motion of July 2022 (GS 2270), and what plans are in place to build on this work in the next triennium?

*Mrs Jeanette Appleton to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:*

**A** There has been significant progress. There is ongoing work within the Liturgical Commission to take forward the commitment to more inclusive liturgy. Work has been started to gather new data regarding the numbers of disabled people among clergy. Legislation requiring a Diocesan Advisory Committee to include at least one member with personal knowledge or experience of providing access for the disabled was included within the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure 2024.

In 2024, the work moved on strongly with the launch of the disability project, running a number of initiatives around developing accessibility and inclusion. Examples include launch of community wellbeing spaces, a second year of a development programme for disabled and neurodivergent leaders, and publication of a specialist newsletter called Disability Matters.

Additionally, an important grants-funding programme is in place distributing grants of up to £50,000 to applicant parishes in the northern province to improve the accessibility of their churches.

This work will hopefully be continued and developed in the next triennium, subject to award of funding, including a further year of Enabling Leaders, extending the grants programme to the southern province, further training and conferences, and the possibility of working with disabled children, young people, and those with learning disabilities.

**Ms Fiona MacMillan (London) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:**

**Q24** In July 2022 the General Synod passed the following motion:

‘That this Synod, affirming disabled people (with hidden as well as visible disabilities) to be fearfully and wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God, and mindful of the progress already made in removing some of the barriers which disabled people, clergy and lay, face; commit to working towards the removal of all remaining barriers to full participation for disabled people in the life and ministry of the church, and, in initiating that process:

- (a) request the Faith and Order Commission and the Liturgical Commission to consider how our liturgies might be made more inclusive to disabled people (e.g. by removing rubrics such as “all stand”);
- (b) call upon the Research and Statistics team to interrogate existing data and gather new data, which quantifies the numbers of disabled people among clergy, whilst also planning to extend to include lay ministers and NCI/diocesan staff in the future, so that Synod can monitor the representation of disabled people within the church and encourage accountability for progress;
- (c) request the Archbishops’ Council to introduce legislation to amend the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 to require every DAC to include at least one person with direct experience and knowledge of accessibility issues in its membership or co-opted if not appointed as a member; and
- (d) acknowledging that the General Synod motion passed in July 2007 (that every Diocese should appoint a lead person on disability issues), request that the ongoing review of dioceses, and recognising that resources for additional officers in every diocese are limited, encourage dioceses to cluster together to employ a full time Disability Adviser across a manageable group of dioceses.

Regarding part (d), how many Dioceses have clustered together to employ a full time Disability Adviser across a manageable group of dioceses?

*Mrs Jeanette Appleton to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:*

**A** We are not currently aware of any dioceses which have clustered together to employ or engage a Diocesan Disability Adviser, but we would be very glad to hear from dioceses who have or plan to implement this recommendation.

**The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:**

**Q25** In view of the Church of England’s call to become ‘Younger and More Diverse’ and the need for role models of all kinds to manifest and encourage diversity of vocations, how are Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people being equipped for leadership?



*Mrs Jeanette Appleton to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People:*

**A** In 2023-24, a pilot cohort of 12 people were nominated for leadership training within the Enabling Leaders course, consisting of residential conferences and webinars. Feedback from participants at the end of the course indicated a growth in their confidence and leadership capacity. In 2025, a second year of the programme was launched. The two cohorts have included those with disabilities, sensory impairments and neurodivergence, providing them with opportunities to explore their identity as made in the image of God and to continue to grow in their capacity to lead others.

A national conference for those involved in Ministry to the Deaf has been arranged for this June. The National Adviser for Deaf Ministry supports any Deaf people who use British Sign Language and feel called to ministry and leadership of any kind. They are encouraged to make contact via the Church of England website. Deaf Anglicans Together also offers support and advice.

In a number of ways, CMDDP is seeking to strengthen the contribution of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people within the church. This is a significant task that will require the commitment of the whole Church.

## **COMMITTEE FOR MINORITY ETHNIC ANGLICAN CONCERNS**

**The Revd Sandra Schloss (Co-opted) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:**

**Q26** How many women of Global Majority Heritage background occupy senior clerical posts (archdeacon, dean, or bishop) in the Church of England?

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

**A** Due to data regulations, we are unable to answer this question specifically but can advise that there are fewer than twenty (20) persons across the senior clerical posts (bishop, archdeacon, and dean) who may be considered of Global Majority Heritage (GMH), which includes some women.

This response speaks to a need to address issues of GMH/UK Minoritised Ethnic (UKME) representation at all levels in the Church but also reflects the need to address data collection on protected characteristics in the People System and other human resource databases, as the absence of complete data is a challenge to planning processes.

**Canon Dr Addy Lazz-Onyenobi (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns:**

**Q27** Global Majority Heritage people are gifts and blessings to the church. As 'Anglican Minority Ethnic Network' (AMEN) and 'Anglican Network for Intercultural Churches' (ANIC), sit outside the CofE structures, is it possible to create a network and support for them within the structures?

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

**A** There is immense value in having the 'Anglican Minority Ethnic Network' (AMEN), the 'Anglican Network for Intercultural Churches' (ANIC), and other similar groups as independent voices and critical friends of the Church on matters racial justice

and related issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Should they seek formal linkages with the structures of the Church, there is the possibility of exploring whether they could be included in the new racial justice governance structures, specifically the Racial Justice Panel (see GS 2377).

Instructively, in April 2024, the then Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, and President of the House of Deputies, Julia Ayala Harris, established the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice. The Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice is a voluntary association of dioceses, organisations, parishes, and individuals dedicated to the work of the racial reconciliation and inclusion, that is, becoming the Beloved Community. The Coalition is designed to work alongside and in collaboration with existing racial justice programmes in the Episcopal Church,

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

**Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the Archbishops' Council Audit and Risk Committee:**

**Q28** The Church of England seems to have barely disappeared from the news cycle in recent months, and our credibility appears might rightly be described to be at an all-time low. Would the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee inform Synod what assessment the Committee has made of the risks this brings to the Church both in its national and local functioning.

*Mr Chris Gill to reply as Interim Chair of the Archbishops' Council Audit & Risk Committee:*

**A** Senior managers in the Archbishops' Council (AC) are the risk owners of the AC's strategic risks and are therefore directly responsible for managing those risks. That work is carried out as an ongoing process in line with the National Church Institutions' (NCIs') Risk Management Policy. Clearly, some of the recent events are difficult to assess in advance and, therefore, to mitigate for.

The Archbishops' Council Audit & Risk Committee (AC ARC) has responsibility for overseeing that process, which it does through receipt of a strategic risk update report twice a year. The AC's Strategic Risk Register (SRR) was last considered by the AC ARC on 5 November 2024 and subsequently updated and considered by the AC on 12 November 2024. The next review of the AC SRR by the ARC is scheduled for 24 June 2025. As part of that process, the Risk & Assurance team will meet with the AC individual Senior Management 'Risk Owners' and consider the key risks.

## **LEGISLATIVE REFORM COMMITTEE**

**The Revd Canon Alice Kemp (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee:**

**Q29** Canon C 4.3 states: 'No person shall be admitted into holy orders who is suffering, or who has suffered, from any physical or mental infirmity which in the opinion of the bishop will prevent him from ministering the word and sacraments or from performing the other duties of the minister's office.' Canon D 2.4 states the equivalent for deaconesses. What discussions have taken place at the Archbishops' Council towards the removal of Canons C 4.3 and D 2.4?

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply as Chair of the Legislative Reform Committee:*

- A** The Legislative Reform Committee has considered this alongside all the requests for legislative change. As set out GS Misc 1405, the current legislative programme is extensive with important, complex and time critical pieces of legislation, such as the National Church Governance Measure, Clergy Conduct Measure and Mission and Pastoral Measure. This means there is less capacity for staff to engage with other legislative items, such as consideration of the removal of Canons C 4.3 and D 2.4.

As a Committee, we are focused on helping the Legal Office to prioritise the legislative business and we understand that this does mean that some legislation can take longer to be considered by Synod, but we do review this regularly.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

**Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:**

- Q30** Will the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee please identify the person or persons (or body) which asked the Committee "to consider whether to amend SO 112(2)(a) to reduce from two to one the number of questions which a member may table"? [See paragraph 8 of the Committee's 66 Report, GS 2399]

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones to reply as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:*

- A** The request came directly from a member of Synod and that member has requested that I do not name them publicly. Synod members are encouraged to approach members of the Standing Orders Committee to raise any amendments to Standing Orders they would like the Committee to consider, and any such suggestions will be treated as private.

**Mrs Rebecca Cowburn (Ely) to ask the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:**

- Q31** Following the Chair's response to Question 226 of the Question Session at General Synod in November 2023, has the Standing Orders Committee now considered whether there should be a procedure in place to address any case where a motion passed by Synod is subsequently found to have been predicated on legal advice that was, inadvertently, incorrect, unreliable or subsequently withdrawn or revised; if so, what was its conclusion?

*The Revd Canon Joyce Jones to reply as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee:*

- A** The Committee considered this request at one of its meetings and it would be extremely difficult for this to be addressed in generality. However, if the situation arose, it should be dealt with in the specific situation. There are currently Standing Orders which could be used for this and members would be advised to do so.

## **CLERGY DISCIPLINE COMMISSION**

**The Revd Prebendary Patricia Hawkins (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:**

- Q32** Given the general legal principle that a defendant found not guilty is not required to pay legal costs, and given that to date only 19.6% of CDM cases have resulted in a penalty, what work is being done to consider financial redress for CDM respondents who were obliged to pay legal fees, and no penalty was applied?

*The Ven Mark Ireland to reply on behalf of the Chair of the Clergy Discipline Commission:*

- A** There is no legal principle in the criminal courts that a defendant who is acquitted of an offence is not required to pay his or her own legal costs. In limited circumstances a defence costs order may be made in favour of a defendant who has been found not guilty. Since the coming into force the CDM in 2005 a penalty has been imposed in approximately 25% of all cases. Legal aid is widely available to respondents under the provisions of the Church of England (Legal Aid) Measure 1994 and where applied would mean that a Respondent is not liable for payment of their own legal costs regardless of the outcome of the complaint. Responsibility for administering the legal aid system rests not with the Clergy Discipline Commission but with the Legal Aid Commission.

## **CROWN NOMINATIONS COMMISSION**

**Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

- Q33** In November 2000, General Synod debated a report entitled *Working with the Spirit: choosing diocesan bishops. A review of the operation of the Crown Appointments Commission* (GS 1405). It became to be known the *Perry Report*.

The *Perry Report* suggested that candidates should provide a personal statement "indicating how they see themselves and the development of their ministry, what gifts they believe themselves to have and how these might be used" (para 2.26). The report also made mention of a factual "nomination form" (para 2.24). One witness said the CAC [Crown Appointments Committee - the predecessor of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)] "relies on hearsay and a 1½ page summary" (para 3.32).

Please would you outline (perhaps by way of the notice board) the CNC process as it currently operates, and the papers supplied to the CNC for each candidate?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

- A** The discernment process for the nomination of Diocesan Bishops in the Church of England is a lengthy one that commences on the announcement of the vacancy. On completion of the diocesan Vacancy in See process, and extensive consultation exercise undertaken by the Appointments Secretaries, the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) convenes to consider the information provided by the Vacancy in See Committee of the diocese, the Appointments Secretaries and the National Church.

Through the information provided, and over the course of several months, the CNC discerns the gifts, skills and experience needed in a new Diocesan Bishop, with individual members prayerfully and carefully submitting names for consideration. The CNC has one informal online meeting followed by two formal in-person meetings, where the Role Profile and Person Specification are agreed, candidates are shortlisted, interviewed and a vote is taken on who to nominate.

Details of the papers supplied for each candidate to the CNC are given on the Notice Board.

**Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

- Q34** In November 2000, General Synod debated a report entitled "Working with the Spirit: choosing diocesan bishops. A review of the operation of the Crown

Appointments Commission GS 1405” it became to be known The Perry Report. Paragraph 3.50 of The Perry Report said, “Of the 119 men considered for 18 vacancies in the four years 1994–97, 29 (25%) were considered twice, 18 (15%) three times, 13 (11%) four times and 17 (14%) more than four times... Of the men appointed to these 18 sees, 3 had been considered twice, 5 three times and no fewer than 7 more than 4 times.” Please would you provide similar statistics for long listed and shortlisted candidates and those actually appointed, over the four years 2021 to 2024?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

**A** References below to longlisting, shortlisting and appointing refer to all candidates involved in the relevant stage e.g. data relating to the appointed candidate will be included in the information for longlisting, shortlisting and appointment.

In the four years between 2021 and 2024:

A total of 139 names were considered (i.e. at least longlisted) for 18 Diocesan vacancies.

Of the 77 individuals longlisted across the 18 Diocesan vacancies:

13 (17%) were longlisted twice  
8 (10%) were longlisted three times  
5 (6%) were longlisted four times  
4 (5%) were longlisted more than four times

Of the 39 individual candidates (at least shortlisted) for 18 vacancies,

6 (15%) were shortlisted twice  
4 (10%) were shortlisted three times  
1 (3%) was shortlisted four times  
1 (3%) was shortlisted more than four times

Of the 16 individuals appointed for 16 vacancies\*

3 (19%) were shortlisted twice  
3 (19%) were shortlisted three times  
1 (6%) was shortlisted four times  
1 (6%) was shortlisted more than four times

\*excluding Carlisle and Ely that did not appoint.

**Mrs Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q35** How many names are currently on the “Ready Now” lists for diocesan and suffragan sees? Of these, if the information is available, please can we see what percentage are of Global Majority Heritage, what percentage are women, what percentage are Traditional Catholic and what percentage are Complementarian Evangelical? Are there any dioceses from which no candidates have been nominated to these lists within the last two years? If so, please name the dioceses.

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

**A** Number of names on ‘Ready Now’ lists: 103

71 Male, 32 Female. Of those that offered the information, 87 white, 13 Global Majority Heritage (GMH). Of those that offered this information, 5 Conservative Evangelical, 2 Traditional Catholic.

Percentage as GMH –13%  
Percentage as women – 31%  
Percentage as Conservative Evangelical\* – 5%  
Percentage as Traditional Catholic – 2%

\* Please note that in relation to the data requested and currently held, the term 'Conservative Evangelical' has historically been used in place of 'Complementarian Evangelical'. A new diversity data collection form to be introduced in 2025 addresses this matter.

No candidates have been nominated to either list in the last 2 years from: Bristol, Carlisle, Derby, Norwich, Sodor & Man, though individuals from these dioceses have been nominated into discernment processes in this period.

An individual does not need to be on a 'Ready Now' list to be considered for an episcopal role, either suffragan or diocesan.

**Mr Peter Barrett (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q36** Why is there a weighting towards conservatives in the southeast of England among Central Members of the Crown Nominations Commission? Has this factor had any impact on the recent inability to select a diocesan bishop for Ely and Carlisle?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

**A** Central Members of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) are elected by the General Synod. Since the discernment of the CNC is confidential, and voting on who to nominate takes place by secret ballot (as required by General Synod Standing Orders), it is not possible to comment on the factors that may/or not have impacted on the outcome of the CNCs for Carlisle and Ely. This can lead to uninformed speculation on what has taken place.

**The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q37** Given the wide consensus that whistleblowing is an institution's 'first line of defence' against loss of integrity, what whistleblowing policy is in place for the Crown Nominations Commission, how has it been communicated within and outside the CNC, and what use has been made of such a policy if it is in place?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

**A** As a Commission of the General Synod, the Crown Nominations Commission operates within the framework established by that body. There is currently no whistleblowing policy for the General Synod and, by extension, the Crown Nominations Commission. There is a 'Code of Conduct' for members of the General Synod and a CNC-specific Code of Conduct is being developed for consideration by the Central Members of the Commission. As part of this process, consideration will also be given to the development of a whistleblowing policy for the CNC.

**The Revd Stephen Corbett (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q38** In the light of questions (those written, together with verbal supplementaries) asked at the February 2024 sessions of General Synod - in particular, Questions 77-82 - and the answers given, can the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission assure this Synod (and the wider Church of England) that criteria for the selection of the next Archbishop of Canterbury will include (a) significant experience as an incumbent and as a bishop, (b) depth of theological education, and (c) acceptance of, and commitment to the doctrine of the Church of England?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:*

- A** An extensive consultation exercise will commence in February 2025 to inform the Crown Nominations Commission's consideration of the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion. The themes that emerge through this consultation will sit alongside the 'Statement of Needs' produced by the Diocese of Canterbury, as well as other information provided by the National Church and Anglican Communion. The information provided will inform and support the discernment of the CNC on the particular gifts, skills and experience needed in the next Archbishop of Canterbury.

## **DIOCESES COMMISSION**

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

- Q39** Given the asymmetric size (both in terms of Total Average Sunday Attendance and in particular, following the Leeds Diocese Reorganisation, the number of Dioceses (12 v 30)) of the Northern and Southern Provinces - has any consideration been given to the possibility of the transfer of Dioceses from the Province of Canterbury to the Province of York, and if not, will it now be?

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

- A** The Dioceses Commission has not given consideration to the possibility of transferring dioceses from the Province of Canterbury to York and there are no current plans to do so. Given the current Vacancy in See in Canterbury it would not be appropriate to bring forward plans at the moment, however the Commission always remains open to bring proposals for change and to open the conversation with stakeholders in future, should such changes be desired and considered beneficial to the ministry of the dioceses and the wider Church of England.

**Mr Gabriel Chiu (Liverpool) to ask the Chair of the Dioceses Commission:**

- Q40** Has the Dioceses Commission been consulted on or had any discussion of the impact of potential amendments or changes to Delegated Episcopal Ministry as a result of the LLF process, and what the impact would be on Dioceses, and if so with what outcome?

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

- A** The Dioceses Commission receives regular updates on LLF and has been mindful that it will need to consider any proposals relating to episcopal ministry and potential impact and implementation. The Commission will be consulted on the proposals for Delegated Episcopal Ministry relating to LLF and will be considering the proposals at its next meeting in March 2025. The LLF Programme Director will present to the Commission at this meeting and will have a substantive discussion with members to gather their feedback.

## **FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION**

**The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:**

- Q41** In 2017, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York formally recognised the orders of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) under the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967, after advice from the Faith and

Order Commission in consultation with the Council for Christian Unity. Will FAOC, in consultation with CCU, please provide similar advice on whether the orders of the Anglican Network in Europe (ANiE), which derives from ACNA, should be recognised by the Church of England?

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

**A** The Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) has not been asked by the House of Bishops to consider the status of the Anglican Network in Europe (ANiE) as of yet. FAOC offers advice on such matters when requested, or when it arises as a matter of theological reflection already in progress. The latter is not presently the case, but should such advice be requested by the House of Bishops, FAOC would consult with the Council for Christian Unity to compile the necessary evidence and to undertake the requisite theological reflection. The Church is always willing to consider conversations with other ecclesial communities where these are likely to be fruitful, and FAOC and the CCU are pleased to play their part in that process.

**The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich) to ask the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:**

**Q42** GS Misc 1406 pp.39-40 notes suggestions that disagreements over LLF must be merely “third order” since they do not affect the creeds or the basic love ethic, and even bishops and archbishops disagree over these matters. However, history shows that theological disagreements not affecting creeds or the basic love ethic can still seriously divide the Church - as demonstrated by the Donatist schism and the Reformation. Will the Faith and Order Commission be doing further work to increase understanding of why disagreements over LLF may not be merely third order?

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

**A** GS Misc 1406 observes that ‘[t]he majority of those who have been supportive of the introduction of the PLF... would most likely not claim that it is a first order issue’ but ‘prefer to locate disagreement at the third level’. The FAOC paper describes this as a view taken by many within the Church but does not endorse it. From page 37 to page 43, in fact, the paper outlines no fewer than six ways in which Christians characterise the nature of the disagreement; among them, views that locate the disagreement as belonging to the first order of significance.

Theological work on doctrine and disagreements over doctrinal formulations in relation to the Living in Love and Faith programme continues as part of the work that the ERG has been asked to prepare. It will take into account the differing views in the Church of England about what sort of disagreement surrounds the current and proposed uses of the Prayers of Love and Faith.

**Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter) to ask the Chair of the Faith and Order Commission:**

**Q43** If the implementation of Prayers of Love and Faith seeks to honour same sex marriages as something God blesses whilst also maintaining that they are doctrinally proscribed, is it the view of the Faith and Order Commission that it is possible for two completely contradictory truth claims to both be true?

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

**A** The Prayers of Love and Faith, as currently commended with accompanying guidance, do not bless same sex marriages. The prayers ask for God’s blessing on individuals, not relationships of any configuration. There are no proposals, at present, to change the language of the Prayers. It is not the case, therefore, that



'two completely contradictory truth claims' are in contention with one another at present. Further detail on this point is available now in GS Misc 1407, Appendix A.

## LITURGICAL COMMISSION

### **Mr Kenson Li (Co-opted) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q44** Following the 81st anniversary of the priesting of the Revd Dr Florence Li Tim Oi, has the Liturgical Commission taken steps to consider the inclusion of Bishop Ronald Owen Hall (1895-1975), her ordaining Bishop, who continues to be widely remembered for his work for social justice in Hong Kong, in the Common Worship Calendar of Commemorations?

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

**A** The Commission keeps a file of names forwarded to it (including that of Bishop Hall) 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 whose names have not been added to a Church of England Calendar. It has therefore published for this Group of Sessions (as GS Misc 1409) some guidance for dioceses and churches to consider when considering whether to introduce new local commemorations and how to do so.

### **Ms Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q45** Is there any work happening to provide liturgical resources for use by Chaplains and Healthcare staff called upon to enable assisted dying?

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

**A** The Liturgical Commission undertakes work at the invitation of the House of Bishops. No work on this subject has been requested.

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp (Bristol) to ask the Chair of the Liturgical Commission:**

**Q46** The Legal Advisory Commission of the General Synod's advice note 'The use of non-alcoholic wine and gluten free bread' states that under the provision of Canon B17 it is not legal to use completely alcohol-free wine or gluten free bread at Communion. Bread must be made using wheat flour and, although processing this can remove substantial amounts of gluten, a residue will always remain, and the product will be reduced gluten rather than gluten free. The use of alternatives made with rice or potato flour are prohibited. Wine must be 'the fermented juice of the grape.' Although a substantial amount of alcohol can be removed after the fermentation process, this cannot be entirely removed so there will always be a residual alcohol content. This means that both priests and congregants who are unable to consume gluten and/or alcohol are forced to receive in one kind only or may be prohibited from receiving both elements if they are unable to consume both gluten and alcohol.

Can consideration be given to amending Canon B17 to enable the legal use of gluten free and alcohol free elements at the Eucharist to remove the injustice of this exclusion?

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

**A** Evidently, the Business Committee could introduce legislation to amend Canon B 17. However, the rationale for such a change would have to overturn two settled

positions in the Church of England: first, that bread made with wheat and the fermented juice of the grape are the elements to be consecrated in Holy Communion; and second, that receiving Holy Communion in one kind in a case of necessity (even if that necessity is habitual) is not an 'exclusion' but full participation in the sacrament, as often practised in the communion of the sick (*Notes to the Celebration of Holy Communion at Home or in Hospital*) or with children (*Guidance on Celebrating the Eucharist with Children*). Indeed, even '[b]elievers who cannot physically receive the sacrament are to be assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them' (*Notes to the Celebration of Holy Communion at Home or in Hospital*).

## **CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**

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

**Q47** Ezekiel 18.19,20 states, 'Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father? Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.'

Should the Church of England be proposing to atone for our ancestors' transgressions by putting aside £100 million for reparations for slavery, without a full debate of the issue by Synod?

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

**A** The Church Commissioners' Board of Trustees has legal responsibility for decision-making, taking into account Charity Commission guidance.

However, we recognise the importance of consulting with General Synod members as important stakeholders for this work, and we were pleased to present an update to Synod in February 2024, followed by questions from Synod members; a fringe session at July Synod in 2024 with specific ways for Synod members to contribute their thoughts and shape the future of this work; and a series of online drop in sessions at the end of 2024 for General Synod members to come and discuss the work. All of the information gathered at these sessions has been valuable in helping us think about our implementation plans. We will continue to provide ways for General Synod members to input to this work.

The Church Commissioners considers researching its history and responding to its links with enslavement to be an essential action as a responsible investor, and as an important missional activity that will support the work and ministry of the Church of England in England.

### **The Revd Stuart Craddock (Lincoln) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q48** What progress has been made towards establishing the Spire Project Fund, and when are we likely to see the first grants and investments being made?

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

**Q49** In answer to both Q199 in July 2023, and Q108 in February 2024 regarding Project Spire, it was stated that the hope was for the "funding/investment programme to commence in 2024"/"the new fund will be operational by the end of this year". Please could you confirm if funding has commenced, and the fund is operational; and if not provide Synod with an updated timeline; and clarify the reason(s) for the delay.

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

**A** With the Chair's permission I shall answer Mr Craddock and Mrs Chapman together.

We are currently working through the essential, valuable regulatory processes required to establish the new fund. Once approved, the new fund will be set up to rigorous governance and investing standards and best practices. This process is reliant on external agencies and authorities, which will determine the implementation timeline. Investments and grants will not be made until approval is received.

Implementation of our proposals is taking place within a strong programme structure, with high scrutiny from a Programme Board and the Church Commissioners' main Board. The Project is covered within the NCI Internal Audit Programme to ensure independent scrutiny of processes and controls. While we work through the regulatory process, we are proceeding with engaging with a range of fund and financial sector experts to input into our thinking if and when we get regulatory approval. We are also delivering commitments to conduct additional research and undertaking theological work which is core to the development of our response. This includes the development of a theological underpinning for the new fund; continuing to explore our archive; and developing materials to support churches to learn more about this work.

We have been grateful for the input and support of Synod members during the fringe meeting in July 2024 and the open briefing sessions in December 2024 and will keep members informed as we make progress.

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

**Q50** During Synod's discussion a year ago on Links to Transatlantic Chattel Slavery (GS 2341) a number of speakers expressed the desire for other organisations to join the Church's initiative and thus increase the value of the £100m fund. Have any such organisations come forward, and what is the current value of the fund that was set up?

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

**A** We are currently working through the regulatory processes required to establish the new fund. As this process is reliant on external agencies and authorities, it is difficult for us to predict a firm timeline, and the fund has not yet been established.

We continue to develop relationships with other organisations that are looking into their own history and connections with enslavement and those discussions include organisations considering making similar investments to that which we propose, which would help to achieve our ambition to see the overall scale of the initiative grow significantly beyond our £100m commitment.

**The Revd Rachel Webbley (Canterbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q51** The news shared by Bishop Graham Usher that the Church Commissioners restoration scheme at Bartonsham Meadows has been registered as part of the Communion Forest is encouraging. What ambition is there that more Church of England land be designated as part of the Communion Forest and who is leading work to encourage this?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners are pleased to have registered Bartonsham Meadows and collaborate with the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Anglican Alliance. This

opportunity aligns well with local connections to the Diocese of Hereford and is supported by the Wildlife Trust's involvement, while also increasing public access. We will continue to explore other suitable projects for inclusion in the initiative and encourage other Church of England landowners to do likewise.

We will also consider commercial factors, resources, local circumstances, and tenant needs as part of this process.

We have planted 819 acres of new woodland in the UK since 2014. Over the past two years we have purchased 438 acres of land in Wales and Scotland, with the intention of establishing new woodlands with 350,000 trees. In total, we have planted 11.8 million trees across the land portfolio over the past five years. We participated in the Queen's Green Canopy initiative including an 11,080 mixed tree plantation in north-west England. We also facilitate a range of other initiatives including trees within hedgerows and wetland creation.

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

**Q52** In 2021 the Church of England's 'Coming Home' report created an interactive map that accurately identifies all Church land and buildings within dioceses, in order to help respond to the housing crisis and build better communities. The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed a UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration from 2021-2030 and recommends rewilding 30% of land during that decade. Is it therefore possible for the Church Commissioners to make publicly available a map of their land holdings which would show their contribution towards that target and potentially provide information identifying housebuilding opportunities?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners provide a range of publicly available information on our land investments and initiatives, alongside details already in the public domain such as through the Land Registry. Where we are engaged in housebuilding opportunities, these form part of local plans and are subject to local stakeholder engagement, public consultation and disclosure.

We do not plan to publish a full map of our land holdings due to resource and staffing considerations, commercial sensitivities, and the need to respect our tenants' interests. However, we remain committed to providing updates on initiatives that support both nature and community development, including biodiversity projects, sustainable food production, and housing.

**Mr Andrew Yates (Truro) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q53** In April 2021 in answer to my question number 78 about the biodiversity crisis, Loretta Minghella as First Estate Commissioner replied saying that the Commissioners 'will develop a measurable strategy for achieving net zero whilst protecting and where possible enhancing nature across the portfolio'.

Later in November 2021 in relation to the UK Government's 30 x 30 commitment to protect at least 30% of nature by 2030, Alan Smith responding to question 76 said 'we will be continuing to review our current commitments in the coming months to understand whether we should also sign up to this initiative'.

Can the Church Commissioners now confirm what percentage of its land will be committed to restoring to nature by 2030?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners do not currently allocate a fixed percentage of land exclusively for nature restoration. Much of our land is leased to tenants for farming

and food production or sustainable forestry. Our approach is holistic, aiming to optimise land management by integrating nature recovery alongside these activities, rather than re-allocating land solely for restoration, and helps support the wider goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

We support tenant farmers in adopting sustainable practices and integrating nature projects. A survey of over 80 tenants found that 91% are carrying out initiatives to increase biodiversity, and 80% participate in government environmental schemes. We also work with Wildlife Trusts and Natural England through specific nature-focused tenancies, including a marshland restoration project with the RSPB.

All our established forests are managed sustainably, and all harvested timber is certified. In the UK, biodiversity is the primary management objective for at least 20% of our forests by area, including native woodland, which we have doubled since acquisition.

More broadly, we are monitoring the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' evolving 30x30 strategy, the role sustainable food production might play, and how our work aligns with national goals as they develop.

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

**Q54** At the July 24 synod, the First Church Estates Commissioner confirmed that over £800m of the Commissioners investments was in climate and environment solutions which is over 7% of the current portfolio. He expressed an ongoing aim to invest more in climate solutions, alongside due diligence processes. Would the Commissioners consider joining the Green Investment Declaration launched by Just Money Movement and Operation Noah? They could already be at the highest 'Oak' level of investment, and could influence wider green investment by taking this step?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** As Mr Lawrance points out, we have significant investments in environmental solutions, and we are active in many climate and nature initiatives. We may sign up to new initiatives, but we are selective due to ensuring fiduciary alignment and ability to fulfil the commitment. We are not looking for additional initiatives related to climate solutions, so we are not planning on signing the Green Investment Declaration.

The Church Commissioners is committed to our net zero target for our investments and see investing in environmental solutions as a lever to contribute to a net zero world. We look favourably on opportunities that provide solutions to global challenges, including climate change, while also generating appropriate risk-adjusted financial returns.

We are supportive of other faith institutions investing in climate and nature solutions, and we often share our knowledge with other faith-based investors and the wider investment industry. We applaud the community that the Faith-Consistent Investing Collaboratorium provides its members.

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

**Q55** The First Church Estates Commissioner is on record (*Daily Telegraph* 14 January 2025) as being dismayed that money is rapidly flowing away from Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Funds (funds from investors that galvanise action against climate change). Could this not be because investors see their primary role to ensure the maximum return of their investment, and that they judge that the current UK headlong rush to Net Zero is an unrealistic business objective?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** My Op-ed did indeed express dismay – that the assault on global climate action which we are observing is an assault on investor rights to freely choose how to invest money. Such assaults undermine the mechanisms essential to the efficient functioning of capital markets in pursuit of long-term sustained returns.

There is a long and proud history of investors using the creative energy of capitalism to help overcome global challenges: modern slavery, human rights, gender inequality, deforestation, and public health are just a few examples. Strong economies require a flourishing humanity.

We see the effort to prepare for a net zero carbon world as a core part of our fiduciary duties. It is a rational, disciplined capital allocation decision. Our 2023 divestment from oil and gas companies was also a rational investment assessment on the under-allocation of capital to renewable sources of energy by such companies, especially when we are seeing the smart money of private equity and venture capital increasingly interested in financing the transition.

The Church Commissioners has been around for 320 years. Our investment strategy is, and always has been, to generate long-term returns. We have a fiduciary duty to maximise sustainable distributions for the benefit of the Church of England in England across generations. Morals and money point us in the same direction. Values drive value.

**Mr Nigel Lea-Wilson (Liverpool) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q56** Given the strong historic and ongoing investment returns of the Church Commissioners, and relatively poor investment returns of a number of Dioceses; What consideration have the Church Commissioners given to creating a fund or other collective investment vehicle into which other Church Charities (principally DBF's, but potentially others) could invest in order to benefit from the Commissioners investment expertise and reduce duplication of effort across dioceses?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** We appreciate the confidence Mr Lea-Wilson has in our Investment Team and their capabilities.

However, the Church Commissioners are not regulated to manage other bodies' funds. We are required by statute to focus on the management of the historic endowment, formed from the merger of the original Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

There are already opportunities for parishes, DBFs and other Church charities to invest their funds and reduce duplication of effort through collective investment vehicles run by investment management firms. These include the six CBF Church of England Funds managed by CCLA.

**Dr Phillip Rice (London) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q57** When will the headline figure for the 2024 overview of the value of the investment fund managed by the Church Commissioners be available and how in practice could the publication be brought forward?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** In keeping with due process around financial disclosures, the value of the endowment fund managed by the Church Commissioners can only be revealed on the date of publication of the annual report and accounts. The target publication date is mid-June. Any communication ahead of the target publication date is embargoed for regulatory reasons.

The publication date is determined by fixed constraints surrounding the timeline of the year-end process, which include the closing of the accounts, the completion of the external audit, the review of the accounts by the Audit & Risk Committee, the approval of the accounts by the Church Commissioners Board and the signing of the accounts by the auditors.

The Church Commissioners follow an efficient, well-planned audit process and are aiming to publish the annual report and accounts as soon as practicable and well within the timelines determined by the FCA in its capacity as Listing Authority for our listed Bonds.

**The Revd Marcus Walker (London) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q58** For each of the years since 2018 how much money (i) has been spent (a) under the terms of section 2 of the National Institutions Measure 1998 and (b) under the terms of section 1 of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure 2018 and (ii) is forecast to be spent in the future (a) under the terms of section 2 of the National Institutions Measure 1998 and (b) under the terms of section 1 of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure 2018?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Section 1 of the Miscellaneous Provisions Measure 2018 came into force on 1 March 2019 and has only been used for grants made since the start of 2020. Prior to this all grants from the Commissioners to the Archbishops' Council were made under the '1998 power'.

Since the start of 2020 some grant streams clearly fit under the 1998 power (e.g. Lowest Income Communities Funding) and others have been made using the 2018 power (e.g. support for the Parish Giving Scheme and the energy cost support provided to parishes through dioceses in 2022).

Other grant streams (e.g. the Diocesan Investment Programme) certainly fall within the broad 2018 Measure, but some or all aspects of individual grants may also fall within the powers of the 1998 Measure. To ascertain which proportion of each such grant falls within the scope of the 1998 power is not practical. Therefore, I provide the analysis below stating the total of grants that were entirely within the scope of the 1998 power (which would also have been possible under the much broader 2018 power), those made under the 2018 power only and those which were partially covered by the 1998 Measure and entirely covered by the 2018 Measure (which are not mutually exclusive).

It is not possible to provide this analysis for future grants which would require judgements about grant allocations that have not yet been decided.

<b>Church Commissioners' grants to Archbishops' Council</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Source: CC annual report and accounts	£m	£m	£m	£m
1998 Measure	49.6	43.5	37.9	33.5
2018 Measure	17.2	20.1	38.3	38.0

Partially covered under 1998 Measure Entirely covered by 2018 Measure (not mutually exclusive)	28.0	25.7	52.0	81.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>128.2</b>	<b>152.9</b>

**Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q59** Can the Church Commissioners please set out the reasons for their refusal to publish the cost to the Church of providing legal representation to bishops in respect of defending themselves against allegations of failing to follow safeguarding rules, and have they considered whether such a refusal is in line with the Nolan principles, especially those relating to transparency and accountability?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** In the answer to question 102 during the February 2024 group of sessions, the Church Commissioners identified the cumulative sums which had been expended in providing support for bishops' legal costs in the years 2019 – 2023.

As a consequence of the fact that a bishop holds office as a corporation sole it is possible for the office to be impressed with legal liability for the wrongdoing of a former office holder. The Commissioners supports bishops to defend claims for which their office may be liable, for example for the wrongdoing of a former office holder, but subject to guardrails which provide that they would not usually fund a claim which alleged wrongdoing by a serving office holder. The decision-making in each case is fact sensitive and depends on its own merits and, as such, it is not appropriate to give further details in public.

Decisions on costs are closely monitored by two trustees of the Church Commissioners under long-standing governance arrangements which ensure that decisions are within scope of the Church Commissioners' powers. Under the governance arrangements, the process is subject to the independent NCI Internal Audit Programme.

**Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q60** What are the financial and other benefits included in the settlement agreement by which the Archbishop of Canterbury left his post in January, and do the terms of that settlement include a Non-Disclosure Agreement?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Archbishop of Canterbury's departure from office was not subject to a settlement agreement. He has received the financial payments to which he is lawfully entitled as a clergy office holder. His departure from office on 6 January 2025 is not the subject of any confidentiality agreement. With the Commissioners' agreement, the Welby family is staying in the archbishop's private quarters at Lambeth Palace for up to 6 months ahead of their relocation to their new home.

**Mr Philip Baldwin (London) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q61** It is in the public domain that, because there are no alternative statutory or discretionary powers, the exit of Canon Andrew Hindley from his position in Blackburn Cathedral could only be secured by a financial settlement, the details of which are subject to a non-disclosure agreement.

In the interests of Transparency and Accountability, can the Church Commissioners set out, for the benefit of ordinary congregation members, which fund was used to make the payout, and why was an NDA agreed, despite IICSA's second recommendation on the handling of safeguarding complaints, which states that the



Church should “ensure confidentiality agreements are not put in place in relation to such complaints”?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Canon Hindley retired from office on ill-health grounds, not by way of financial settlement. Following his retirement from office he brought a claim in judicial review against the office of the Bishop of Blackburn, and the Church Commissioners agreed to the settlement of that claim from their general fund as part of their ordinary process for the management of legal claims which may be brought against the office of a bishop.

The compromise in question was expressly without prejudice to any safeguarding complaints or complaints under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 which were live at the time of the consent order, or which any party may wish to bring in future, and there is no confidentiality provision or otherwise which bars the disclosure of such matters.

**Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q62** How many times have the Church Commissioners been asked to fund a settlement for clergy of any order which has been attached to a non-disclosure agreement or the equivalent?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** I cannot speak to events before my time in office. I understand this question to ask whether the Church Commissioners has been asked to agree to a contractual provision which prevents the disclosure of a safeguarding failure or wrongdoing, or which prevents a person from speaking about in connection with wrongdoing. The Commissioners has not agreed to any such agreement and have made clear that any terms must not prevent any person speaking out about a safeguarding or disciplinary failing.

I am not able to comment or provide data on any settlements that may have been made by dioceses or cathedrals as all of these have their own independent HR arrangements in place.

I would also refer to the answer given to question 61.

**023 Mr Charles Houston (Hereford) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q63** Would the Church Commissioners consider setting aside a modest sum to invest in training programmes for apprenticeships in trades such as stone masonry, stained glass, lime plastering and building conservation which are in decline but are desperately needed to conserve our ancient buildings?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Triennium Funding Working Group is currently working to assess the wide-ranging financial needs and priorities of the Church and to formulate recommendations to the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners' Board for spending plans for the next triennium. I will make the Group aware of Mr Houston's Question, but I cannot prejudge what its recommendations may be given the broad range of funding requests and finite money available.

We do however welcome this question as we are aware there are desperate shortages in some of these skills, and we encourage the use of the training programmes for apprenticeships to support these valuable heritage trades. Mr Houston may also be aware of the support the Commissioners gave to cathedrals

during the pandemic, granting £900k to 12 cathedrals to safeguard these roles and the work of the Cathedrals' Workshop Fellowship in this area.

**The Very Revd Christopher Dalliston (Deans) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q64** Could the Church Commissioners confirm how much interest they have received since 2000 on outstanding interest only (or value led) loans first made to cathedrals in the 1980s and 1990s?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners replaced their Finance System at the start of 2009. The previous system is no longer accessible, and we only have the data at the requested level of detail from the start of 2009.

For loans that were outstanding at the start of 2009 (most, if not all, would have been made in the 1980s and 1990s), between 2009 and 2024 the Church Commissioners received interest of £203,000 (an average of c. £12,700 per annum over that period) on value linked loans to cathedrals and £6,600 (an average of c. £400 per annum) on other loans.

**Mr Paul Ronson (Blackburn) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q65** For those Archbishops' initiatives which occur at Lambeth Palace, having been supported and encouraged by the previous Archbishop but not funded by the central church (Centre for Cultural Witness, Community of St Anselm) - are they charged a commercial rent for use of space, a nominal one, or none at all?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The office space that the Centre for Cultural Witness (CCW) and the Community of St Anselm (CoSA) use within the offices at Lambeth Palace is limited and not 'rentable' but they do both pay for all their own staff and administration costs.

CCW has a formal agreement with Church of England Central Services (ChECS) for support services (e.g. IT) while CoSA pays rent on the three cottages it uses at the Palace. These properties are not suitable for letting on the open market, and so the rental charge was agreed by the Church Commissioners' Bishops and Cathedrals Committee.

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

**Q66** Given the significant proposed changes to the roles of the Church Building Council (CBC) and its Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC) within the new Mission and Pastoral Measure (GS 2394), please provide a summary of any consultation which has taken place with those bodies, with specific mention of how their views have been given due regard in the proposed measure.

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** Following the request of the Archbishops' Council for a review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 there was an extensive period of consultation with the public and partners, including the CBC and SAC, between October 2020 and July 2023, when Synod approved the policy proposals in GS2315.

In addition, a working group was convened with representatives from the CBC and SAC in autumn 2023 to help the Commissioners consider and resolve the outstanding building policy issues to inform the draft legislation. The group met several times, and the full CBC and SAC were then briefed on the draft policy paper which set out the policy proposals, on which they were able to comment. The comments and views expressed were heard and considered conscientiously, and

changes made, for example in relation to the mandatory report on church building closure.

The Commissioners are very supportive of the role of the CBC and the SAC and value their expertise and advice. The draft Measure makes some modest changes to the detailed processes to simplify the system and allow the processes to move more smoothly, but the necessary checks and balances to ensure a robust approach in relation to buildings have been retained.

**Mr Ian Johnston (Portsmouth) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q67** As part of the policy work in preparing the proposed new Mission and Pastoral Measure have the Church Commissioners done a broad calculation of the effect of how many churches would not have been closed in the next ten years under the old law but that are anticipated to be closed under the new law? And if so, what was the result?

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Church Commissioners have not made such an assessment because it is a hypothetical question that cannot be answered. Any closure decision is necessarily case- and fact-specific and depends on the facts and matters which are in issue at the time of the decision.

It is also not possible to assess at this stage whether more closure decisions are likely to be made under the new Measure. Under the 2011 Measure the Commissioners consider any objections to closure and it is our proposal that the same approach should continue to apply in future.

**Mr Timothy Hamilton (Exeter) to ask the Church Commissioners:**

**Q68** Given the significant impact on Diocesan Advisory Councils (DAC) of the new Mission and Pastoral Measure (GS 2394), please provide a summary of any consultation which has taken place with DAC Chairs, with specific mention of how their views have been given due regard in the proposed measure.

*Mr Alan Smith to reply as First Church Estates Commissioner:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council asked the Commissioners to review the Mission and Pastoral Measure (2011) and there was an extensive period of consultation across the church and with the public and partners between October 2020 and July 2023, when Synod approved the policy proposals in GS2315.

The draft Mission and Pastoral Measure recommends that DACs would provide a short report to the diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee to inform a decision on church building closure. The Commissioners recognise that DAC capacity varies, so the draft Measure also allows the report to be provided by the NCIs' Cathedral and Church Building team (CCB) as well as a suitable, paid professional such as a church architect. Therefore, if the DACs lack the necessary capacity there are suitable alternatives, which should mean that no DAC should feel unduly pressured in this regard. Presentations on the emerging thinking on the Measure were given at annual DAC conferences, and the Commissioners have liaised extensively with the diocesan teams and the CCB team, who work closely with the DAC network, as it has developed its approach.

## PENSIONS BOARD

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

**Q69** The 2023 Annual Report of the Pensions Board published last summer identified that just under 5% of the Pensions Board's investments are in climate solutions. The 2023 Stewardship report includes a commitment to increase investment in climate solutions. Are the Pensions Board considering joining the Green Investment Declaration set up by Operation Noah and Just Money Movement? They could already be at the middle 'Sapling' level of investment, and could influence others to invest for climate benefit by making this declaration?

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

**A** Thank you for drawing attention both to this initiative, and the Board's Climate Action Plan published last year.

The Pensions Board does indeed remain committed to addressing climate change and investing in climate solutions and opportunities to support a more sustainable world, in the best interest of our beneficiaries and in line with our regulatory obligations.

The Board is already committed to several investor initiatives. For example, we co-Chair the Paris Aligned Asset Owner Initiative – a large climate initiative bringing together 57 asset owners with \$3.3 trillion in assets under management. (This initiative provided us with best practice guidance to underpin the Climate Action Plan.) We are also involved with the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change's climate solutions and emerging markets working groups, which are also focused on addressing barriers and demonstrating best practice for investment in climate solutions. We take our role in these seriously and in view of these commitments, at the present time we are not seeking to sign on to or resource further specific climate initiatives.

Our Stewardship Report and Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures Report for 2024 (published later this year) will further report back on investments in climate solutions and progress on our Climate Action Plan.

### Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:

**Q70** For the last year for which complete records are available A. How many retiring clergy were approved for assistance with retirement housing through the CHARM Scheme; and B. How many were actually housed in (i) properties newly acquired for the purpose or (ii) existing CHARM properties which were re-assigned?

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

**A** In 2024 we received 74 new applications to the Board for help with retirement housing (with retirement dates over the coming five years). As of today, we are currently helping around 200 clergy households in planning their future moves over the same time horizon.

A total of 77 clergy households moved into Church retirement properties in 2024, of which there were 29 moves into the Board's Community Living schemes, and 48 moves into rented properties. Of these 16 households moved into homes recently purchased by the Board, and 32 moved to homes in our existing portfolio which were refurbished for their new residents. We purchased 49 new properties to add to the portfolio last year.

Additionally, the Board supported 26 more clergy families in securing options with other providers, where that best met their retirement plan. This included supporting 10 households who had approached the Board originally to enquire about rented options, but who were subsequently able to afford to buy a home of their own.

**Mr Adrian Greenwood (Southwark) to ask the Chair of Pensions Board:**

**Q71** In the next 5 years (up to 31/12/2029), A. How many stipendiary or salaried clergy who currently live in 'tied housing' are expected to reach retirement age? (An upper and lower range of estimated numbers will be acceptable.) B. Of those, how many are unlikely to afford to make their own arrangements for retirement housing? (An upper and lower range of estimated numbers will be acceptable.)

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

**A** A) As at 30 January, 1,537 active members of the clergy pension scheme are aged 62 or above. If past retirement patterns hold true, the majority of these would be likely to retire within the next 5 years. We do not hold data as to how many of these members are currently living within tied housing, but one might reasonably expect it to be the vast majority.

B) currently around 1 in 6 clergy retiring from active ministry seek help from the Board with Church retirement housing and a recent survey of pension scheme members, run in January 2024 (of which results were captured through this [report](#)) indicate that this could rise to 1 in 4 within the next 3 to 5 years.

In the last year, 10 households approached the Board expecting to go into rental accommodation but following signposting support from Housing Officers were able to secure a homeownership route.

I encourage any clergy who might need help with housing to get in touch with our teams.

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

**Q72** How many rental properties does the Pensions Board currently have available for retiring clergy, and how does this relate to the number of clergy on the waiting list?

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

**A** The most recent property bulletin in December advertised 46 available properties (inclusive of 7 Community Living options) spread across 25 dioceses.

Please note this figure does not include a similar number of properties which have already been reserved by retirees but not yet occupied.

The Board is currently working with around 200 clergy households with planned retirement dates over the next five years. We encourage clergy who might need help with housing to get in touch with the team to maximise choice. In addition, the Board can offer help to clergy in making moves to other providers which may better suit retirement plans. It can take up to two years to plan a retirement move well, and sadly, we continue to see clergy approaching us at the last minute which means options can often be more limited.

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

**Q73** How many widows and widowers are currently housed in Pensions Board rental properties?

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

**A** Based on the data available in the time available, we estimate that 264 residents in rental homes are widows or widowers, which represents just under a quarter of the rental portfolio. The proportion is slightly higher in Community Living, estimated at just over 25% with c. 68 residents being widows or widowers.

**Mr Robin Lunn (Worcester) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q74** At the July 2024 Synod, Clive Mather stated that existing tenants of Pension Board housing were eligible to move to new houses on the scheme when their health and mobility needs change. How many existing tenants have been rehoused in the last 3 years?

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

**A** In the last 3 years, 21 retired clergy households moved from a rented home with the Board into one of our Community Living schemes. A further 12 moved into another rental home with the Board as circumstances changed during retirement.

The Board offers a range of support to residents who are looking to make a move in later life. Each case is very different and often requires bespoke support. Changing health and mobility needs in later life can often best be met by a move into purpose-built, more accessible accommodation – either the Board’s Community Living schemes or options with other providers, which our team is happy to help residents explore. Depending on the circumstances, this can often be the quickest route to a move, which can also reduce the need for a further move later in retirement if needs continue to change.

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

**Q75** How many clergy taking early retirement on health grounds are currently seeking Pensions Board rental properties?

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

**A** The Board is currently supporting five clergy who are taking early retirement due to ill health with their retirement housing plans. While most are looking to move into a rented home with the Board, we will also offer help with exploring other housing options too, so that together we can find the best possible retirement home for their circumstances. On average, the Board would expect to see 5-10 clergy a year retiring from stipendiary ministry on health grounds and needing support with housing.

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

**Q76** In response to a supplementary question in July, Clive Mather said that there is a policy of care and responsibility for clergy whose health leads to early retirement. How is the evidence of those whose experience has not met the standards he described being processed and used to improve the service?

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

**A** The Board regularly seeks feedback from pension scheme members, housing applicants, and residents to help inform and improve our services. Feedback is gathered through surveys sent to new retirees to gain insight into their retirement experience, meetings with our Resident Panel, one to one conversations, focus groups, and a new annual customer survey (which looks at experience of the Board’s services in the round). Complaints and compliments are also tracked, with key themes and trends informing continuous improvement of the support we

provide, and discussions with Trustees. The feedback we receive is generally very good. Nonetheless, despite our best efforts we do not always get everything right, but we do seek to review, learn, and improve.

Ill health retirement represents a profound and often unexpected challenge to the way in which a priest is able to exercise his/her vocation. We recognise this and pay particularly close attention to feedback from those who have had to retire early in such circumstances. We recognise that timescales are often truncated, and that additional support is often required. We seek to work closely with retirees and the diocese to ensure they are supported as well as possible through the retirement process. We are always willing to discuss and address any concerns.

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

**Q77** What training is given to Pensions Board housing officers to assist them to provide the best pastoral service to sick clergy taking early retirement, who are often vulnerable and traumatised?

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

**A** The Board's Housing Officers, who are the point of contact for housing applicants, generally come with experience from the social housing sector and are recruited for their professional and personal skills.

All staff participate in regular safeguarding training appropriate to their role (focused on ensuring all staff are able to respond well to those who may be vulnerable or at risk, and how to act if they have safeguarding concerns). Other recent examples of in-service training with a particular focus on pastoral service have included: supporting customers struggling with their mental health; working well with those who are deaf or experiencing hearing loss; and building awareness of neurodiversity when working with customers. These are in addition to general training programmes such as data protection and individual training identified through performance reviews.

The Pensions Board appreciates the need to offer very particular care and attention to those retiring early due to ill-health. Where a retiree needs help with housing in such circumstances, we aim to provide a named Housing Officer as their main point of contact through the process of finding the right home for them.

**Canon Izzy McDonald-Booth (Newcastle) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q78** Is there a reason why retirement housing services do not permit siblings a right to succeed a tenancy? Would the Board consider a clause to allow this to happen (e.g. in the way it did when Civil Partnerships became law), especially when some family members have lived together in church accommodation for many years, and when the clergy person dies the remaining sibling will be left homeless?

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

**A** Consistent with the Board's charitable objects, and within the funds available, retired clergy and their spouses/partners are our priority in offering subsidised rental housing. This is clear in the standard lease agreement.

In those rare circumstances where another family member is living with the primary tenant when the primary tenant dies, we seek to work with them sensitively and assist them in finding appropriate long-term accommodation for their circumstances.

If your question is prompted by a concern about a particular situation, please contact Tom England, Director of Housing.

**The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Pensions Board:**

**Q79** What is the timescale for the clergy Pensions Review, and what is the likely timeline for the impact of its recommendations?

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

**A** Per GS Misc 1391, work following last February's Synod resolution is a joint endeavour covering several strands. It is being progressed in parallel with both the triennium funding process and the statutory triennial valuation of the clergy scheme. This allows proposals to be costed and the financial implications (particularly for dioceses) to be managed.

Increasing the National Minimum Stipend remains the quickest and most effective way to increase starting pensions for all serving stipendiary clergy. I note that GS 2380 reports the Archbishops' Council's thinking on this, in addition to the 5% increase from 1 April 2025 which will feed through into starting pensions from 1 April 2026, reported in GS Misc 1399.

In addition, the Board is supporting the Council to bring forward proposals in relation to the pension benefit structure (including addressing the one-year lag issue). With Business Committee consent, the timetable would see specific proposals come to Synod in July 2025; technical changes to the Rules and amending Regulations to Synod in February 2026; allowing implementation from 1 April 2026.

Meanwhile, interim steps by the Pensions Board and Church Commissioners have included:

- Significant discretionary increases to pensions in payment in April 2023 and April 2024, improving on the guaranteed increases and matching the higher levels of inflation.
- Additional one-off uplifts to pensions commencing in the years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to mitigate the cliff edge impact of low growth in stipends and the period of high inflation.

## **ETHICAL INVESTMENT ADVISORY GROUP**

**Mr Ian Boothroyd (Southwell & Nottingham) to ask the Chair of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group:**

**Q80** Following approval by the Synod a year ago of the motion affirming the dignity and value of purposeful work, has the EIAG any plans to review the brief references to employment rights and issues relating to contract workers in the documents relating to Supply Chains (2007) and Human Rights (2021), in order to give fuller advice to the National Investing Bodies for their engagement work: in relation for example to arbitrary treatment of employees; rights of association and collective bargaining; and rights and conditions for contract workers in what the Synod motion referred to as the "gig economy"?

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

**A** The EIAG has a full workplan for the year, which does not currently include this specific topic. The EIAG will be undertaking its biennial horizon scanning exercise in the Autumn and we welcome the suggestion that this topic might be considered in that process.



It may also be helpful to note that, first, the EIAG is in the process of reviewing and updating its existing advice papers, which will include the Supply Chains advice in due course. Second, the Synod paper and transcript of debate from last year already offers a valuable contribution on the subject and provides a point of reference for Church bodies. Third, the Human Rights advice is intended to support the NIBs in engaging across a wide range of themes, including workers' rights, and expects businesses to 'avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur'.

The EIAG's December 2024 report on "Artificial Intelligence" addressed key factors underpinning the issues covered in last year's debate and how they will be shaped in the "Age of AI".

## **ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL**

### **Mrs Gill Verschoyle (Salisbury) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q81** The Charity Commission has confirmed that it is "engaging with church leaders the recommendations from the Makin Review to ensure that any areas that need addressing are done so quickly." Can the President please tell Synod who from the Archbishops' Council is the Charity Commission engaging with, and does this include the Secretary General?

### **Ms Fiona MacMillan (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q82** Who from Archbishops' Council is the Charity Commission engaging with, and does this include the Secretary General?

*Mrs Alison Coulter on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** With permission I will answer questions 81 and 82 together.

On 8 January a group of trustees of the Archbishops' Council met with the Charity Commission. The group comprised the Archbishop of York, Carl Hughes, Alan Smith and me. Staff present were William Nye, Alexander McGregor, and Julie O'Hara from the National Safeguarding Team. The Bishop of Stepney was also present, as were trustees and staff from the Church Commissioners and Church of England Central Services. A number of items were shared with the Commission following that meeting on behalf of the trustees.

Staff of the National Church Institutions are in regular contact with the Charity Commission on matters of mutual interest including, for example, the National Church Governance measure and the Future of Church Safeguarding.

### **Mr Luke Appleton (Exeter) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q83** What are the current average Monthly Active Users for the CofE's Daily Prayer app in the past 12 months?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** On average, 80,000 separate users accessed the app every month over the past year.

In this period, the Daily Prayer app has been used over 3 million times on Apple devices, with an estimated further 2 million on Android bringing the likely total to over 5 million sessions.

In the same period, 2.1 million episodes of the Daily Prayer audio – launched in March 2021 by the Digital and Publishing Teams – were downloaded, reaching over 906,000 unique individuals. This brings the all-time total listens to over 11 million, reaching over 2.9m individuals in over 200 countries.

Alongside this continued engagement, the Church of England's Everyday Faith app – launched recently (in July 2024) – is also growing in popularity, providing support for daily discipleship all year round.

Behind these encouraging statistics lie many moving stories of the positive impact that this resource has had on individuals, not least those facing isolation, illness or bereavement.

**The Revd Canon Simon Talbott (Ely) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q84** Why did the Archbishops' Council choose to ignore the specific warning from the psychologist, Professor David Glasgow, that the closure of the ISB would cause "significant harm" to the survivors?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The report made by Professor David Glasgow was not commissioned by the Archbishops' Council and was carried out and published after the closure of the Independent Safeguarding Board. It could therefore not be used by the Archbishops' Council in its consideration of the closure of the ISB.

**Mr Guy Horder (Birmingham) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q85** Clause 8.5 of the Terms of Reference of the Makin Review requires that: 'In advance of publication, the Director of Safeguarding will take reasonable steps to give advance warning to any organisation or individual they consider has been subject to criticism in the Review and will provide a reasonable opportunity for that organisation or individual to respond and take all reasonable steps to incorporate a response in the Review as appropriate'.

Did all the people criticised in the Makin Review confirm its truthfulness in advance of its publication?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The representations phase of the Makin Review, which is provided for in paragraph 8.5 of the Terms of Reference, allowed those persons or bodies who were or who may have been criticised in the report to have a reasonable opportunity to respond to the reviewer's comments. This is a normal part of public law due process sometimes known as "Maxwellisation". It was not intended, nor would it have been appropriate or practicable, for that process to seek confirmation as to the truthfulness of the independent reviewer's findings in the report. The Director of Safeguarding has confirmed that all those who were criticised in the report were contacted and the comments of those who responded were taken into account by the reviewer in line with the provisions of the Terms of Reference and the usual principles of public law.

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

**Q86** "Cease and desist letters" have been sent to survivors who have persistently raised complaints about their treatment by the Church institutions and its officers; the letters are written by lawyers external to the Church, acting for and on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. Given the controversial character of such practices both

inside and outside of the Church, because of their alleged hinderance of robust debate, can the President of the Archbishops' Council provide for Synod's scrutiny, a comprehensive account of how such letters are authorised and the consequences monitored, including whether all members of the Council are consulted in advance and/or whether they receive updates including copies of the responses thereto and the costs thereof, so that they may each assess and contribute to the decision as to whether the continuation of the practice is justified both in general and in specific cases?

*Mr James Cary 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 appropriate action where required to ensure a safe working environment. The action taken in any case will be subject to all the relevant facts and circumstances. It would not be appropriate to provide specific detail about any particular case, but the Archbishops' Council will always ensure that the decision to send any such correspondence, and the costs of doing so, are managed in accordance with its governing arrangements.

**Mr Martin Poole (Chichester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q87** What training is given to diocesan safeguarding teams to enable them to understand and support neurodivergent people?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** At present we do not offer specific training to the support needs of neurodivergent people. However, this year we will be working with the Committee for the Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People to develop a Good Practice Guide which will underpin future work of the National Safeguarding Team, as well as dioceses and cathedrals. We do offer regular continuing professional development opportunities to Diocesan Safeguarding Teams and these specific learning needs will be considered as part of the roll out of the Good Practice Guidance in 2026. The National Safeguarding Team also promote the importance of Diocesan Safeguarding Teams accessing training via their local Children and Young People's Partnership and Safeguarding Adult Board, as well as other local charities and providers etc.

Last year we asked Plain English to review all our training material to ensure it was accessible to all. We are also training our staff to prepare all documentation using the Plain English approach.

**Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q88** In the course of the debate on 17th January in the House of Lords concerning "Mandatory Reporting", Baroness Benjamin raised the complexity of the subject in relation to counsellors working with those seeking to address their paedophilic inclinations.

Can the President, on behalf of Archbishops' Council reassure survivors, Synod and the public at large, that under the newly adopted "Conflict of Interest" policy, no organisation that simultaneously works to promote the interests of abusers and/or those with sexual attraction to minors, whether by promoting greater "understanding" or otherwise, whether or not they purport to put in place "Chinese Walls", shall be accepted by or on behalf of the Church as advisors, to promote the interests of survivors and the protection of vulnerable individuals.

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council does not and would not knowingly enter into arrangements with such an organisation or indeed any that promote illegal activity of whatever form.

**Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q89** On 24 November 2023 Dr Sarah Wilkinson published the independent report commissioned by the Archbishops into the events leading to the closure of the ISB on 21 June 2023. At paras 569 to 588 the facts of the closure events are recorded; at paras 589 to 593 the report documents the impact on those whose Reviews were halted, they having received the news in the public media. The Secretary General is recorded as having specifically rejected the advice of Safeguarding expert Steve Reeves to delay the public announcement to avoid risk of harm to the survivors.

Clinical evidence of the actual harm suffered by those now known as the 'ISB11' was supplied to Archbishops' Council in a report dated 10 January 2024 by Clinical Psychologist Prof David Glasgow, who had formerly been appointed to advise the Church by reason of his professional experience and expertise.

Paras 3:1 to 3:3 of the Glasgow report records survivors suffering "significant harm" and that "this acute exacerbation of symptoms risked life threatening consequences."

Has the Archbishops' Council sought from and/or voluntarily received from the Secretary General, in his capacity as Chief Executive of the Archbishops' Council (see para 10 Wilkinson), an offer to make an apology to the 'ISB11' for rejecting the protective Safeguarding advice, and causing the consequent "significant harm", or has he been subject to any other form of institutional accountability consequence for these events at the instigation of the Archbishops' Council?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council has apologised to those survivors affected by the closure of the ISB for the hurt this caused them, and the Secretary General fully associates himself with that apology. It has not been possible to make a direct apology specifically to those survivors described as the 'ISB 11'. The details of the 'ISB 11' are not known, and were not known at the time of the closure of the ISB, to members of the Archbishops' Council or the Secretary General. However, there was a small number of survivors known to the NST to be engaged with the ISB, who were informed of the closure in advance of the announcement.

The report by Professor David Glasgow was not commissioned by the Archbishops' Council and was not based on any engagement with the review by Sarah Wilkinson which the Archbishops' Council commissioned, nor with the National Safeguarding Team. Work is under way further to the recommendations in the Wilkinson review. A specific lesson within the Wilkinson Review, related to the closure of the ISB, was for Archbishops' Council members to undertake trauma-informed training on the handling of complaints, victims and survivors. Members of the Archbishops' Council and staff supporting trustees have undertaken this training.

**Mrs Nicola Denyer (Newcastle) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q90** While we await the creation of structures that will provide independent oversight of Church safeguarding, will you commission iNEQE to carry out an independent safeguarding audit of the National Safeguarding Team, using the National Safeguarding Standards and thereby holding the NST to the same standard as every diocese in the Church of England?

*Mr James Cary to respond on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Yes, the NST will be independently audited by INEQE in July/August 2025. The audit will use the National Safeguarding Standards as per those audits undertaken in dioceses and cathedrals. The report will be published following completion of the process.

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

**Q91** What arrangements have been made to ensure the confidentiality of abuse survivors' personal information when someone who has been working with them in a different professional capacity within another organisation joins the National Safeguarding Team?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Professionals who work with victims and survivors of abuse are very aware of their obligations of confidentiality and the sensitive information they hear or have access to as part of their work. When employed by another organisation professionals would have been required to ensure they conform to data protection and confidentiality policies. Once they move to new employment, they no longer have access to the previous organisation's records or systems. The expectation would be the same as in any other organisation. Therefore, the obligation is on the individual to ensure that they do not use any prior knowledge in their new post, and if there is a conflict when transferring that this is raised with their new line manager and addressed accordingly.

**Mrs Vicky Brett (Peterborough) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q92** The legal difficulties encountered by the former Archbishop of Canterbury and then Bishop of Blackburn as they sought to overcome issues relating to preventing 'the presence of Canon Andrew Hindley from Blackburn Cathedral' are already in the public domain. Given the seventh published objective of the Council is

*"Safety and Dignity: A Church that affirms the dignity of all people by being a safe place for all, especially children and vulnerable adults,"*

were the structural difficulties being encountered by the Archbishop, Bishop, and their lawyers ever brought to the Archbishops' Council for discussion to devise and/or secure necessary reform by legislative change or otherwise, and if so, will the President of the Archbishops' Council publish the minutes of the discussion and resolutions to address that problem with a view to preventing a recurrence?

*Mr James Cary to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** An issue coming from this case has been whether a bishop could suspend or remove from office a cleric on the basis of a risk assessment alone, without proof of criminal acts or misconduct. This point was considered by the General Synod and rejected when, at the February 2014 group of sessions, it adopted the more limited option for change set out in GS 1941. This issue has now been suggested for a fresh consideration. Staff of the Archbishops' Council are working on proposals which, if approved by the Council and the House of Bishops, could lead to new legislation on this point.

**The Revd Canon Valerie Plumb (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q93** Did the Archbishop' Council consider correcting the misleading and inaccurate statement that the vote to close the ISB was unanimous either later during that Synod, or at any stage for a year afterwards, and in particular after Dr Sarah

Wilkinson set out the facts from her report; and if not, will the Council explain why not?

**The Revd Robert Thompson (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q94** Following the Archbishop of York's Personal Statement in respect of the voting at Archbishops' Council to close the Independent Safeguarding Board which he twice wrongly reported as "unanimous", did the Archbishops' Council consider correcting the misleading and inaccurate statement?

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

**A** With permission I will answer questions 93 and 94 together.

Members will remember the item at the July 2023 group of sessions relating to the Independent Safeguarding Board. In July 2024, it was pointed out to me, that I had said to the General Synod (in July 2023) that the Archbishops' Council's decision had been 'unanimous' around the termination of the church's Independent Safeguarding Board, yet the Wilkinson Report in paragraph 567 said something rather different. There was no intention to mislead – rather when I made those statements, I was clear in my mind that the decision had been unanimous. I apologised for my mistake and clarified the situation in a statement during the General Synod in July 2024, i.e. at the next available opportunity. However, on closer inspection, the decision the Wilkinson Report refers to is around the timing of a decision that had already been made. And it was that decision, made at a previous Archbishops' Council meeting, which although not quite unanimous – there were two abstentions – did show that members of the Archbishops' Council were agreed that the ISB in its current form could not continue. It was that meeting and decision that I was referring to when I spoke in July 2023. I realise my apology has caused further confusion, but I hope the situation is now clear.

**The Revd Canon Valerie Plumb (Oxford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q95** The issue of survivor Gilo's complaint about the Secretary General and the process required to determine it, has featured in Synod Questions before in July and November 2023. He has received no news as to the outcome at the point of submitting this question. Why is it taking so long to resolve a relatively compact set of relevant facts and limited written records, and will a fully reasoned account of the outcome be provided to Gilo and his lawyer and placed in the public domain in the very near future?

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

**A** As part of a good faith desire to put in place an arms-length review of this matter, after it been considered through the NCIs' complaints process, a fact-finding exercise from an independent auditor was commissioned. As part of that process, the fact-finding review team heard from the survivor and other relevant officers, trustees, and former trustees. We regret that that this process has taken longer than expected, but we have wanted to balance the need for the report to be proportionate on the one hand with proper thoroughness on the other. We will shortly be writing to the solicitor concerned, to set out the headline conclusions. We will not be making the report public.

**Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q96** When a letter is written for and on behalf of Archbishops' Council by the Secretary General, what precisely does this mean? Does it denote an agreed minuted

resolution, a delegated decision to a specific person under Standing Orders or an exercise of a discretion by a variable ad hoc group of people within the Archbishops' Council and Church House?

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

**A** The nature of letters sent by the Secretary General for and on behalf of the Archbishops' Council depends on the context and content. It is usual practice for chief executives to send correspondence on behalf of their charity or institution. When the Secretary General is sending letters specifically on behalf of trustees at their request, rather than in his capacity as chief executive of the charity, the trustees will offer a steer on the content and often see a draft of the correspondence before it is sent.

**Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q97** In July 2023 Mr Richard Scorer solicitor to survivor Gilo sent both Archbishops a letter raising significant questions relating to whether an earlier complaint against the Secretary General which had been dismissed upon a premise which had been subsequently falsified following the acquisition of relevant third party minutes of a relevant meeting.

Following a formal question being raised on the floor of Synod, a promise of an early response to Mr Scorer, was delivered on behalf of Archbishops' Council, by the Archbishop of York.

When no such reply was received by the time of the November 2023 Synod, a further question as to progress was raised, and a promise of action offered. Again no response was forthcoming and so at New Year a formal complaint was delivered about those secret processes reserved by the Church for its officers.

Gilo was excluded from participation in an audit or investigation by BDO auditors until he insisted upon the right for he and his witness to be interviewed in person. 18 months after initially complaining he has yet to receive any information about the outcome. It is our understanding that the Deputy Lead Bishop with responsibility for survivor engagement also made her own separate complaint against Mr Nye on this same matter.

Will the President give Synod a comprehensive update on the stage this complaint has reached and why it has taken so long to conclude?

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

**A** I refer to the answer in reply to question 95. The terms of reference for the fact-finding review specified a commencement date of October 2023, and required the review team to conduct tests and interviews; they were not directive about which persons should be interviewed in order to give the review team appropriate freedom to discharge their obligations as they considered appropriate. The survivor in question was interviewed, along with another individual who provided support to the survivor. After a thorough process of investigation including interviews, policy reviews, and retrieval of material from IT archives, a draft report was delivered in autumn 2024 which we have considered carefully, including proper due process for those named in the report, and we have a draft response now ready.

**Mrs Carolyn Graham (Guildford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q98** The State institutions exempt from the Freedom of Information Act include the Royal Household, MI5, MI6, the National Crime Agency and the Church of England. In the light of the Church's declared objective to rebuild confidence in its commitment to

Transparency and Accountability, will Archbishops' Council discuss internally and liaise with the House of Bishops and report back to Synod in July with a paper for discussion, setting out the merits and de-merits of removing that immunity from the Established Church?

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The provisions of the Freedom of Information 2000 only apply to a public authority that is either listed in Schedule 1 of the Act or has been designated as such by the Secretary of State, or to a publicly-owned company.

The Church of England is neither a public authority or a publicly-owned company for the purposes of the Act nor is it a State institution but is, according Canon A 1, "established according to the laws of this realm under the King's Majesty [and] belongs to the true and apostolic Church of Christ".

In this context an exemption to a legislative provision means that, but for the exemption, the terms of the statute would apply to that body. As the bodies that make up the Church of England do not fall within the definitions as set out above, they are not 'exempt from the Freedom of Information Act' but rather they do not fall within the scope of the Act at all.

**The Ven Fiona Gibson (Hereford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q99** At present there appears to be an anomaly between elections for Churchwardens and PCC members, which are governed solely by the Churchwardens Measure (2001) and the Church Representation Rules respectively, and Safer Recruitment procedures for Trustees which involve role descriptions, references, interviews, and DBS checks. Please would you inform Synod how and when the Churchwardens Measure (2001) and the CRR will be updated to remove this apparent anomaly?

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply on behalf of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The statutory [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance](#) is concerned with appointment to roles that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, examples being members of the clergy authorised to officiate, Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers, lay workers, youth worker, employees and volunteers. Trustees – whether elected or otherwise appointed – do not necessarily have substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

The guidance deals specifically with elected roles and describes the relevant legal requirements for election and the taking up of office, including the requirement for a declaration to be made by a candidate that he/she is not disqualified.

Eligibility for enhanced DBS disclosures is governed by secular, not ecclesiastical, law and applies to roles involving "regulated activity". Consistently with the key principles and practices of the guidance, where it is decided that an individual in an elected role is to work with children and/or vulnerable adults the safer recruitment requirements – including enhanced DBS disclosures – have to be applied before he or she is allowed to do that.

The Policy and Development section of the National Safeguarding Team keep the position under review and will be issuing an updated version during early 2026.

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

**Q100** Please provide a list, in tabular form, of all notifications from Archbishops' Council to the Charity Commission of significant incidents, in the last 5 years, listing the Date of incident, Date of Notification, Area of Concern, and a Brief Summary



**Mr Samuel Wilson (Chester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q101** Please provide a list, in tabular form, of all notifications from the Archbishops' Council to the Charity Commission of serious incidents over the last five years, listing the date of the incident, the date of notification, the area of concern, and a brief summary for each.

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** With permission, I will answer questions 100 and 101 together. The information is in the table below:

Date of report	Date of incident	Issue	Summary
2 April 2020	Not known, but first notified to NST in October 2019	Historic safeguarding	Historic allegation of rape against priest who was employed by the Board of Education. Alleged perpetrator now dead
9 April 2020	Historic	Historic financial	Allegations of historic financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult parishioner by a member of the clergy now employed by the AC
17 November 2020	3 November 2020	Data breach	Phishing email sent, hacker used access to send phishing emails for NCI email account
17 November 2020	4 October 2020	Safeguarding	Staff member involved in domestic abuse case
26 February 2021	Historic	Safeguarding	Independent report into the Church's handling of the allegations concerning the former Bishop of Chester
28 July 2022	8 April 2022	Data breach	Disclosure of personal data to a survivor representative and undercover journalist
26 June 2023	23 June 2023	Reputation	Termination of the contracts of members of the Independent Safeguarding Board
13 November 2024	7 November 2024	Reputation	Publication of the Makin review. An update was submitted on 16 December in relation to the David Tudor case
31 January 2025	28 January 2025	Reputation	Allegations in relation to the Bishop of Liverpool
5 February 2025	5 February 2025	Reputation	Possible report on safeguarding

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

**Q102** GS Misc 1123 (presented to Synod in November 2015) lists the Constitutions of the Committees of the Archbishops' Council. All the Constitutions state that "Members

of the <relevant> Committee must comply with the Archbishops' Council's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy". Please could you provide a copy of the policy or policies that this refers to, and to which all members of the Archbishops' Council Committees needed to have complied at that point in time.

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council's Conflict of Interest Policy is available at [Archbishops' Council | The Church of England](#). This is being made available to all committees. The Council has agreed to further work to develop a Code of Conduct for members.

All members of the Council make an annual declaration in line with the form included at annex A to the policy.

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

**Q103** Further to the questions and answers provided to Q155/Q156 in November 2023, and Q160 in July 2024, and statement 4 (d) within GS Misc 1394 (Report on the activities of the Archbishops' Council) that the Archbishops' Council "Agreed a conflict of interest policy (subject to points of detail)" could the Archbishops' Council confirm when that policy will be made publicly available, and if not immediately, what points of detail are still to be agreed and thus holding up publication?

*The Ven Luke Miller to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** The Archbishops' Council's conflict of interest policy is available at [Archbishops' Council | The Church of England](#).

**Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q104** In the light of ongoing safeguarding concerns in general, and in particular the fact that John Smyth was a licensed Reader, what consideration has the Archbishops' Council given to extending the National Register of Clergy so as to include licensed lay ministers, as provided for within Section 2 of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2020?

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

**A** National work regarding lay ministries includes a commitment to excellent safeguarding culture and practice. Initial discussions about extending the National Register of Clergy to include lay ministers have been held with colleagues from Data Services, the National Safeguarding Team, the Legal Office and Ministry Development Team. A budget has been ring-fenced to more fully scope this work and inform a decision about next steps.

The Council's Legislative Reform Committee has been asked to consider this at its next meeting with a view to including the necessary secondary legislation in the list of projected legislation.

**Mr Paul Waddell (Southwark) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q105** What, if any, national resources are available in the Church of England to support mental well-being in churches?

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

**A** Within the Disability Project, the Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People (CMDDP) is currently working towards setting up a new specialist network to support and resource those working at Diocesan level in roles relating to mental health. The intention is to hold regular virtual meetings and potentially organise a national training and networking event. This could then act as a

springboard for the sharing and development of good practice and resources, leading to an outline strategy for self-sustaining, ongoing, collaborative work at national and local level within Mental Health support.

Furthermore, a short booklet is being developed in collaboration with a professional researcher, consisting of testimonies relating to mental health and wellbeing of both clergy and church members. Publication is expected within the next two years. This will lead to greater visibility and awareness across the Church of the needs of people with mental health issues.

The Disability Project is also working with external specialist organisations such as Renew Wellbeing, to setup a number of wellbeing spaces in parishes across the country, where those with mental health issues can be supported in a community café style environment.

**Mrs Ruth Allan (Guildford) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q106** Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the many and various recommendations made to both the Church of England and the Government in the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Families & Households published in 2023, *Love Matters*? What progress has been made implementing these and what engagement has been made about the report and its recommendations with the new Government, elected on 4 July 2024?

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

**A** The Archbishops' Commission on Families and Households made recommendations to the Church of England and HM Government about the steps that each could take to support and strengthen family life. With staff support, the Commission Chair (Professor Janet Walker), Co-Chair (+Paul Butler), and Commission members have engaged in follow-up work through a number of initiatives, including co-creating resources for children and young people with a selection of those who were consulted during the Commission's work, producing a discussion booklet for use by parishes and deaneries, and convening a residential meeting on nurturing relational ability at Sarum College.

The Commission made recommendations to the Church of England which are being considered by the relevant departments within the NCIs and carried forward in different ways. The Archbishops' Council has received a proposal for consideration about introducing a 'family test' in its decision-making. The wide-ranging scope of the Commission means that its areas of focus do not sit with one lead bishop, but a number have raised the Commission's proposals in the House of Lords (including in a dedicated parliamentary debate in December 2023) and engaged with government ministers on the report's findings, particularly on the adequacy of social security, family hubs, and relationship support.

**Dr Chris Angus (Carlisle) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q107** In answer to a question (Q166) to the Archbishops' Council in the July 2024 group of sessions the then Archbishop of Canterbury responded to my query "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?" with "the suggestion that ecumenism is neglected in the thinking around Vision and Strategy and funding streams does not accord with my own impressions".

Would you please: (a) point to any explicit references to ecumenism in the exposition of our Vision and Strategy; (b) provide a list of projects in receipt of SDF or SMMIB funding that contain an explicit ecumenical component with, for each

project, the overall funding for the project and the estimated part of that funding attributable to the ecumenical component.

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

**A** In the original narrative alongside the Vision and Strategy, under the term *humbler*, the Archbishop of York said: “*We also need to recognise that we are not the only Christian show in town. We need to work with our other denominations.*” One way in which this is evidenced is through the ongoing ecumenical work of Thy Kingdom Come which the General Synod will consider at this session. In terms of grant funding, the partnerships funding stream through the SMMIB has funded several key partners to support dioceses and parishes taking forward the Vision and Strategy priorities in local contexts. These include Youthscape, the Centre for Theology and Community, BRF (Messy Church), National Estates Churches Network and CCX, all of whom are explicit about the fact that they work ecumenically. This means the funded work benefits and learns from other denominations. For grants to dioceses, whilst a specific portion of the funding which aids and furthers the work and mission of the Church of England cannot be attributed to the ecumenical component, working ecumenically is often integral to the funded work – examples include the work of Network Youth Church in Carlisle, and the social impact work of many city-centre resource churches.

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

**Q108** Will a copy of the current Archbishops' Council Complaints Policy (or whatever equivalent document details the policy or procedure which will be followed when or if a formal complaint is made) be made available to members of General Synod as an appendix to the Answers Notice Paper? If not, why not?

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

**A** The complaints policy for the National Church Institutions, which includes the Archbishops' Council, is available on the Church of England website at [National Church Institutions | The Church of England](#)

**Canon Nigel Bacon (Lincoln) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q109** What effect has the transfer of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) from the Diocese of Gloucester to ChECS had on its performance? In answering, please provide comparative quantitative data on parish-facing performance including the mean time between donation receipt by PGS and payment to PCCs of (a) the donation and (b) recovered tax.

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

**A** The Parish Giving Scheme was successfully transferred into ChECS on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 moving from ownership of 34 Dioceses, not just Gloucester. In terms of performance relating to mean time between donation receipt and disbursement, this has not changed as PGS follows a monthly process cycle in which all regular giving is collected on the 1<sup>st</sup> working day of the month and disbursed to parishes on the 10th working day. Gift Aid is claimed and disbursed once received by PGS. More information about this can be found on the notice board. PGS is pleased that since ChECS ownership, five more Dioceses have partnered with us to enable parishes to benefit. In 2024 we saw an additional 572 parishes register. Income from giving increased by £10m in 2024, to £99.9M.

**The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (Manchester) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q110** What would be the quickest way for a PCC to request, via the Archbishops' Council, that the Church call for a National Day of Lamentation over last year being the hottest on record and sending the planet past 1.5C of heating for the first time?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** There is an International Day of Prayer for creation already, on 1 September – which marks the first day of the Season of Creation, and given the scientific evidence that 2024 was the hottest on record and the first year in which the planet exceeded the 1.5C threshold set by the Paris Agreement, then prayers of lament would be eminently suitable for this day. The Environment and Net Zero Programmes already have plans in train to mark the Day of Prayer for Creation and also Earth Day on 22 April, and it is hoped that marking both of these days appropriately will best raise the profile of the climate crisis we face with our congregations, ecumenical brothers and sisters and our wider communities.

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

**Q111** Parishes in some dioceses are able to access match-funding for carbon-cutting projects via the Give to Go Green scheme. How much money has been raised by parishes and how much money has been given in match-funding? Are there plans to roll out this scheme to every diocese?

*The Revd Charlotte Cook to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** To date, 71 churches have taken part in the Give to Go Green project across 8 diocesan pilots and between them they have raised £503,429 towards net zero projects such as LED light installations, insulation, under pew and infra-red heating, and new heating control systems. The project has also helped to deliver a few small solar photovoltaic projects. A further £452,357 in match funding has been awarded through the Net Zero Programme. The average amount raised per church was just over £7,000 at £7,090. Give To Go Green has provided funding of £956k towards decarbonisation projects with an overall project cost of £1.4m.

The future of Give To Go Green beyond 2025 is subject to the Triennium funding process for 2026-31.

**Mrs Jeanette Appleton (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops Council:**

**Q112** How has the inclusion of disabled people, of all ages, been considered by the National Sport and Wellbeing Project when setting its objectives and in the projects run by the eight pilot dioceses?

*Mr Joseph Diwakar to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Yes, we are deeply committed to the church being for all which is why in our General Synod paper we highlight the importance of this project for connecting with UKME people, young people, and disabled people. Practically we want to ensure all ability accessibility within our sport offerings. For example, Sportily in Gloucester Diocese operate with a good range of equipment to enable the integration of accessible sports into their offering. They had a disabled child who signed up for an archery course. The coach reached out to the parent to understand their child's accessibility requirements, sourced an appropriate accessible bow and supported the child to take part in the session. Role models such as Paralympian Kadeena

Cox are highlighted to inspire and encourage people. One of our partners KICK have developed Paralympic provision for able and disabled young people and they work closely with SENCOs in schools to work with learning difficulties and disabilities to include all young people in physical activity. In Ridley Hall's Sports Ministry training they work across all sports including para sports and talk about and explore removing barriers – whether created by trauma, gender, class, disability.

**Dr Phillip Rice (London) to ask the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:**

**Q113** Do the statistics for mission about church attendance include the attendance statistics at the services held in the 2024 Christmas period and what is the trend in attendance over the last 5 years?

*Mr Matthew Frost to reply on behalf of the Presidents of the Archbishops' Council:*

**A** Yes, the annual Statistics for Mission survey includes questions about attendance at Christmas and during Advent. Figures for 2024 are not yet available – data collection is currently under way, and we are extremely grateful to all clergy, churchwardens, and others who provide this information, supported by diocesan colleagues. The 2024 figures will be published in due course, once the dataset is finalised and once the necessary data checking and estimation have been carried out. The most recently-published figures, including trends from 2009-2023, can be found in Statistics for Mission 2023.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/statisticsformission2023.pdf>

## **HOUSE OF BISHOPS**

**Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q114** Bearing in mind the statement from the ERG Working Group in GS Misc 1407, below: "Any distinction, therefore, between marriage contracted in a register office and a marriage contracted in church, or between civil marriage and holy matrimony, ought from an Anglican perspective to be considered theologically specious, not to mention pastorally damaging. That is not to foreclose the question of whether the Church of England could permit its licensed ministers to contract a same-sex marriage; but it is to say that doing so on the basis of a purported distinction between the institutions of civil marriage and holy matrimony would be unsound": What was the theological rationale for the invitation to General synod to vote for taking the PLF project forward in February 2023?

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

**A** Aspects of the theological rationale for the PLF appear in several GS papers from debates in 2023. It is not possible to summarise this account in the space available here. Though, a helpful summary is available in GS 2328, Annex H.

To reiterate what the introduction to the PLF resources states, the PLF "are not a form of marriage service, nor do they equate the relationships brought before God to Holy Matrimony." The Prayers of Love and Faith, as currently commended with accompanying guidance, do not bless same sex marriages. The prayers ask for God's blessing on individuals, not relationships of any configuration.

**The Revd Canon Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q115** The Episcopal Reference Group of the Faith and Order Commission states in GS Misc 1407 (page 8) that it would be 'unsound' for any move to permit licensed ministers in the Church of England to contract a same-sex marriage to be based on



the purported distinction between civil marriage and holy matrimony, since such a distinction is both 'theologically specious' and 'pastorally damaging'. Given that the doctrine of marriage is to be unchanged, as per the motion passed by General Synod in February 2023, and yet work on new vocations and ministry guidance is said to be continuing (para 3.12 of GS 2386), has the House of Bishops discussed and/or identified a new theological basis for allowing clergy and ordinands to enter into same-sex marriage, and if so what is this new basis please?

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

**A** The House has not yet received the full report from the Episcopal Reference Group, but as stated on page 3 of in GS 2386, it hopes to receive this work later this year. Once the work of the ERG is completed, then the House will be able to commence discussions on this topic. Work on any future Vocations and Ministry Guidance, as paragraph 3.12 of Annex C of GS 2386 states, will be dependent on this theological advice and any subsequent decisions of the House.

**The Revd Canon Jeremy Moodey (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q116** In view of the stated desire in GS 2354 ('Trust and trustworthiness within the Church of England - a preliminary report') to 'drive a trustworthy culture' (para 232), and 'maximise transparency and accountability' (para 234) within the Church of England, when is the House of Bishops intending to release in full the past legal and theological advice which has led it to the current shape of proposals on Living in Love and Faith that have been, or will be, brought to Synod'?

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

**A** As I said in reply to a similar question at last July's group of sessions, 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 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 authorization 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 advisers. Theological advice provided by the Faith and Order Commission and by its Episcopal Reference Group is contained in GS Misc 1406 and GS Misc 1407.

**The Revd Chantal Noppen (Durham) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q117** We have heard it said, in this chamber on multiple occasions, that *Issues in Human Sexuality* has caused significant and unnecessary harm and that its usage has extended beyond its original purpose and authorization. Can the House clarify the basis or justification for its continued application within the Church's practices and policies?

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

**A** Thank you for this question. I am aware of the concerns and the impact that this has on individuals, and I deeply regret this. The House of Bishops has been clear in its intention and aim to replace or offer guidance that supersedes *Issues in Human Sexuality*. However, identifying the best way to achieve this is a task of one of the LLF working groups and is taking longer than expected because of the need for further theological work. The House will discuss this area again later this year as part of addressing any timetable for considering current restrictions for clergy in same sex marriage.

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

**Q118** When did Synod discuss and formally approve the inclusion of same sex civil marriage for clergy in the raft of actions to be taken forward under the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process?

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

**A** The Synod's view has not yet been sought. In July 2024 the Synod did request that the House of Bishops request further theological work *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 is currently being undertaken and will help inform future discussions and decisions on a timetable and process for formal consideration.

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

**Q119** Are clergy who have solemnised a same sex marriage, for example in other provinces in the Anglican Communion, barred from holding a license or permission to officiate (with associated canonical consequences) in the Church of England (under the provisions of the 2014 Pastoral Guidance), or is it only those who have entered into such a marriage?

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

**A** The Pastoral Guidance does not address the specific possibility of clergy solemnizing same sex marriages in other provinces of the Anglican Communion. Were the question to arise of whether a priest or deacon who had done so should be authorised to exercise ministry in a diocese in the Church of England, it would be for the bishop of the diocese to determine that question having regard to the principles set out in the Pastoral Guidance.

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

**Q120** In the light of the fact of the continuing and contentious nature of the PLF / LLF process, what written scenario planning or risk assessments have been done to work with those groups who may deeply disagree with any final settlement and who will regardless continue to campaign, and can these plans be shown to General Synod?

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

**A** Building an awareness of positions and potential actions in response to proposals is part of our ongoing engagement with stakeholders. We do not at this point have the type of scenario plans you describe. However, as we move towards a clearer outline of a proposal, we will be in a place to begin better to assess implementation needs and risks, and this will involve considering such areas more fully we will report on this in future updates.



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

**Q121** We are proposing a highly structured approach to Delegated Episcopal Ministry as part of the LLF process. A similar approach was adopted for women's ordination over 30 years ago and has been found to be ineffective for female clergy. Why are we going down this route again?

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

**A** The proposal for Pastoral Reassurance drawing on the delegation of episcopal ministry in GS2386 seeks to address the specific issues raised around the PLF and LLF. Insights from the introduction, implementation and outworking of the Provision under the House of Bishops' Declaration have been sought in the development of the draft proposal on Delegated Episcopal Ministry; both in the working group process and from initial input from the House of Bishops' Standing Commission on the Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles. Key elements of the DEM proposal already incorporate this feedback. Further scrutiny will be sought as we develop this proposal.

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

**Q122** What assurances are there so far, or planned, in the Code of Practice, Pastoral Guidance and Bishops' Statement that those who hold to the traditional view of sex and marriage will be defended from accusations of homophobia, within the Church of England?

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

**A** It is difficult to give specific assurances as this would of course depend on the type and veracity of such accusations. However, a clear purpose of what has come to be known as Pastoral Reassurance is to offer firm support for those who "hold to the traditional view of sex and marriage." Elements of the Code of Practice re-enforce this, and the Pastoral Guidance covers key areas of conduct and best practice in public communication to enable this. Further feedback on these drafts to enhance these aims would be greatly appreciated.

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

**Q123** With reference to Annex A (paragraphs 2:2 & 2:16) of GS2386, can you please clarify that merely not offering / using the prayers is inadequate for a Bishop serving as a Delegated Episcopal Ministry (DEM) Bishop, and for such a Bishop to be eligible for DEM ministry they also must not promote, preach or teach in support of them, given that teaching is action?

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

**A** The draft Code of Practice identifies that requests for Delegated Episcopal Ministry would need to be based on tangible actions not perceptions of what a bishop may or may not think about the use of the PLF. As such, actions in preaching, teaching or promoting the use of the prayers could be taken as evidence of a stance in support of the prayers. The Working Group spent a lot of time debating this issue and struggled to arrive at a definition which satisfied all parties. Further feedback on these draft proposals would be greatly appreciated.

**Mr Martin Poole (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q124** How many churches have registered their interest in using the Prayers of Love and Faith through the A Church Near You portal?

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

- A** Currently, 232 churches have used the 'Prayers of Love and Faith' tag on A Church Near You.

**The Revd Alex Frost (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

- Q125** Was a list of potential scenarios which might reasonably be expected to result in compensation under the projected redress scheme drawn in advance in order to inform the design of the scheme, and the scoping of the resources required to deliver a comprehensive response by the Church to its many victims in a variety of abusive circumstances; if so can the list of scenarios be made public so that members can measure the efficacy of the scheme in meeting the perspective demands upon it?

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

- A** Following careful work by survivors and others over the last three years, the Church of England Redress Scheme will be ready to launch once the legislative process is complete.

The forms of abuse recognised by this Scheme are outlined in the draft legislation and were identified following extensive analysis of Church-related abuse, careful comparison with other redress schemes, and in conjunction with survivors. Financial awards will be assessed on the basis of the nature of the abuse, aggravating factors and impacts of the abuse.

Based on their experience of working with other redress schemes, a law firm acting at arms-length as Scheme Administrator has compiled indicative scenarios using documented cases. These scenarios have not been published because they could identify known cases and because the details might trigger trauma.

Following the Makin report, the Project Board decided to consider whether the Scheme's eligibility criteria sufficiently recognise the fault of Church office-holders who received a safeguarding allegation or disclosure and did not respond appropriately, as well as further examining the wrongdoing for which the Church should properly be held accountable. Depending on the outcome of this work, the scope of the Scheme might be broadened which would increase the number of prospective applicants.

Despite thorough analysis, it is not possible to quantify prospective demand. When the draft Measure is laid before General Synod for final approval, accompanying papers will advise members in more detail.

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

- Q126** What plans, if any, have been made by the House of Bishops to establish a process of public lament for our failures in and associated commitment to action on matters of safeguarding, including but not limited to a day set aside to bear witness to such a purpose?

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

- A** The House of Bishops have asked the Liturgical Commission to develop a national service of lament with liturgical resources for parishes, cathedrals and other settings to use for local expression of lament for the Church's safeguarding failings.

This work was initiated through the work of the Redress Scheme Project Board, based on thoughtful proposals by survivors. The liturgy would seek to express the Church's deep repentance and contrition for the many ways that people have been

harmed, recognising the physical, emotional, spiritual and relational effects (among others) of abuse on people's lives.

Survivors have advised that services of this nature must be planned very carefully in order to acknowledge the various ways that trauma can affect people, must treat everyone with respect, dignity and compassion and must be accessible, welcoming and inclusive.

**Mrs Abigail Ogier (Manchester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q127** Methodist Homes (MHA) is pleased to welcome significant numbers of visiting Anglican Clergy to offer regular acts of worship. What mechanisms or relevant advice to Dioceses currently exist, and what additional mechanisms are expected to be implemented (if any) for dioceses to promptly communicate details of CofE safeguarding policy changes or risks related to clergy to preserve the confidence of such valuable partnered organisations such as MHA care homes, schools and hospitals (following the revelation that an unknown or undisclosed number persons with blighted records exist within our clergy ranks)?

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

**A** Dioceses are encouraged through House of Bishop's Practice Guidance to work with partners where a safeguarding concern or risk is known, and the person of concern is known to attend other organisations within their role. Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers (2017), supports the diocese to share relevant information, and to invite relevant parties to be part of the core group where appropriate. This information sharing in relation to suspension/removal of a member of clergy, again should be shared with known organisations in the interest of keeping children, young people and where appropriate vulnerable adults safe.

Any organisation inviting a member of clergy into their organisation can access the National Clergy Register to ensure the member of clergy remains licensed and should contact the diocese for confirmation of status if the clergy member is not listed.

Sharing of changes to safeguarding guidance/codes of practice, would be down to local partnership arrangements.

**Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q128** Given the heavy workload of Parish Safeguarding Officers and others in dealing with church-based safeguarding, is it apposite to require them additionally to deal with safeguarding matters beyond that context e.g. Domestic Abuse?

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

**A** Domestic abuse is an integral part of safeguarding; it is a widescale problem across all aspects of society. There is a clear need in society for a cultural change with regard to perceptions of domestic abuse, and it is important to embed this into every aspect of church life. Challenging inappropriate behaviours, being alert to the signs of possible abuse, and knowing what to do should such issues arise are the most important things the Church can do to keep people safe. The role of the DSO/CSO is to support PSOs to recognise and respond to domestic abuse issues in the first instance, ensuring that PSOs are aware of what to record and refer onwards for additional support to be offered by others outside of Church where appropriate.

**Mrs Sheila Bissell (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q129** What reassurance, evidence and urgent and specific actions can the House of Bishops provide to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the impact of recently reported Safeguarding failures - most importantly relating to the victims of abuse within the Church, but also on the morale of those who work diligently to adhere to the training and practices required for safeguarding the vulnerable at parish level; and on the reputational damage and loss of credibility of the Church in wider society?

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

**A** The National Safeguarding Team and diocesan safeguarding teams are very concerned about the impact safeguarding failures have on victims and survivors of abuse. Support is offered and available from local safeguarding teams and services, as well as from our independent support service, Safe Spaces. Safe Spaces increased its capacity to respond to the increased demand which came about after the publication of the Makin review. Safeguarding failures impact on the whole church, including safeguarding professionals, PSOs, clergy, and congregations. The Lead Safeguarding Bishop wrote a pastoral letter to the church, including to all PSOs, after the publication of the Makin review thanking them for their work in safeguarding. Safeguarding is "everyone's business" and the whole church needs to work together to make the church as safe as it can be, for everyone, as well as to restore trust and confidence.

**Mrs Tina Nay (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q130** Given the frequent recourse to "lessons learned reviews" when public disquiet is expressed about problematic safeguarding allegations, will the Archbishop's Council commit itself to commissioning an early review itself, or in conjunction with Blackburn Diocese, into the case of Canon Andrew Hindley, and publishing the outcome?

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

**A** The Church is committed to learning from all safeguarding cases, and this is reflected in its statutory guidance. In the case referred to, a reflective exercise, as outlined in the Safeguarding Practice Reviews Code of Practice (2023), was conducted by the Diocese of Blackburn. There is no requirement in the Code of Practice for this to be made public and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

**Mr Neil Logan-Green (Canterbury) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q131** Members of the press have approached Synod members asking how many priests in the Church of England having been subject to risk assessments resulting in limited contact with children. Given the widespread public interest in such stories will the President use the period of Synod to liaise with the Director of the NST and the Diocesan Bishops present (and in their absence the diocesan DSOs) to collate that number, announce that number (if any) to Synod to avoid speculation and to institute a swift independent review of any such decisions that may be disclosed?

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

**A** Risk assessments under Canon C 30 are carried out at the direction of the diocesan bishop and information relating to the outcome of those assessments is held by individual dioceses in order to manage any locally and effectively. It is not possible therefore to say how many risk assessments have been carried out which recommend the respondent have limited contact with children under a church safety

plan nor would it be possible to collect this information during Synod. That said, whilst the NST do not collate overall data in this area, as a result of recent preliminary enquiries the NST are currently aware of five church safety plans in operation across the church, although not all relate to children.

There are no plans to implement an independent review of decisions arising out of these risk assessments and there are currently no grounds to believe that any risks that have been identified are not being managed fully in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and other guidance.

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

**Q132** Has the Archbishops Council, or the NST ever, in consultation with the House of Bishops, sought to collate the figures for how many CofE clergy hold office, or have restrictions on their licences, following safeguarding risk assessments, professional or otherwise?

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

**A** Risk assessments under Canon C 30 are carried out at the direction of the diocesan bishop and information relating to the outcome of those assessments is held by individual dioceses in order to manage any locally and effectively. None of the bodies listed in the question have sought to collate the figures mentioned but as a result of recent preliminary enquiries the NST are currently aware of five church safety plans in operation across the church, although not all relate to children or diocese.

**Mrs Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q133** In the wake of the Makin Report, with the focus quite rightly placed on victims and survivors, why is question 13 on the “Confidential Declaration Form for roles meeting the criteria for an enhanced DBS check” still appropriate, requiring as it does victims of false and vexatious allegations to re-live their experiences, potentially multiple times?

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

**A** The Confidential Declaration Form (CDF) is part of the process to recruit individuals safely and assess their suitability to work with the most vulnerable. It provides the opportunity for applicants to declare any information that may have a bearing on that suitability. Although providing information of this nature may be difficult for some individuals, it is essential in the safer recruitment process. Q.13 requires a response where the applicant has been the subject of formal action because of allegations relating to a child or vulnerable adult being at risk of harm. It allows the applicant to provide further explanatory details. Any responses can be explored with the applicant and notes recorded, including any subsequent decisions. Therefore, the applicant should not need to offer an explanation each time they complete the CDF (for example, if this is a diocesan requirement when a criminal record check is renewed).

**The Revd Canon Dr Judith Maltby (Universities & TElS) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q134** The press release for the meeting of the House of Bishops in May 2024 stated ‘The House had a first discussion of the material produced by the working group on the Seal of the Confessional. They noted the importance of further reflection before this work comes back to the House of Bishops later in July’. The matter was not reported as discussed in July 2024 but the Press Release for the House of Bishops meeting in October 2024 stated, ‘The Bishops continue to consider material from

the Seal of the Confessional Working Group (SCWG), noting that further legislative steps by Government on mandatory reporting have yet to be announced'. GS Misc 1393 'Report on the work of the House of Bishops' for this session notes that in October '[The House] discussed the work on the Seal of the Confessional, noting that in the absence of a decision from the incoming Government on how it wished to take forward mandatory reporting, it was hard for the House to make final decisions.'

Given the Government's intention to bring in mandatory reporting as recommended by IICSA, and given that publication of the paper by the SCWG was promised to survivors who participated in its work, when will the work of the SCWG be shared with Synod to inform our deliberations, as well as the wider church?

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

**A** Prior to the general election in May 2024, the Church of England was working with the Government in relation to mandatory reporting expectations. The SCWG working group paper was subject to initial discussion by the House of Bishops which agreed to pause to take account of any recommendations made in the Government's Mandatory Reporting Bill. In recent weeks, the new Government has indicated that it will be refreshing this work. The Church of England is keen to reopen discussions and to understand the scope and detail of any proposed legislation, of which any Church of England proposals would need to be cognisant. It is anticipated that the SCWG paper will return to the House of Bishops once the Government's work has progressed.

**The Ven Malcolm Chamberlain (Sheffield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q135** In relation to the Future of Church Safeguarding (GS 2378), what proportion of Response Group members expressed support for model 4 over model 3, and within the Response Group what were the respective proportions of (a) safeguarding professionals and (b) victims and survivors that expressed support for Model 4 over model 3?

**The Revd Stephen Burston (Chichester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q136** GS 2378 'Future of Church Safeguarding' acknowledges that the Response Group was unable to achieve a consensus regarding the right way forward. There are a number of safeguarding professionals on the Response Group. Without divulging names, please inform Synod about the level of support from these professionals for Models 3 and 4.

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

**A** With permission I will answer questions 135 and 136 together.

The Wilkinson/Jay Response Group terms of reference state that:

"The content of papers, discussions and all activities within the Response Group meetings shall be contained to the membership of the Response Group and its advisors."

However, the group advised me to inform General Synod, through the paper, that they did not reach consensus on a preferred model. On this basis, I decided to propose two options to General Synod for debate and decision.

**The Revd Robert Thompson (London) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q137** On 21 February 2024 the Church of England welcomed the receipt of the Jay Report into the Future of Church Safeguarding and set up a formal response group.

Inevitably, the appropriate scoping and costing the implementation of the proposed reforms must necessarily have involved taking into account the likely scale of the problem which falls to be addressed. In view of the devolved and diffuse character of the Church of England, with 42 individual autonomous Dioceses, in addition to senior clergy failing under the National Safeguarding Team at Church House, can you explain how the Church of England has assisted the response group by collating data on the total number of clergy who are likely to require assessment under a new unified system of independent oversight, whether by collating data on the number of blighted DBS reports, gathering data from currently Approved Risk Assessors, counting the invoices of relevantly commissioned risks assessments, the number of complaints in progress, or otherwise, and tell us the predicted scale of the problem to be addressed.

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

**A** The Wilkinson/Jay Response Group did not request or receive this data.

**Mrs Sandie Turner (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q138** The Five Guiding Principles state:

“...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,
- and 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.”

Resolution parishes may request alternative episcopal oversight. This is in the gift of each Diocesan Bishop and the scope of its provision in any diocese must be negotiated with the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. This means that the extent of delegated provision differs from diocese to diocese, with some Diocesan Bishops delegating many functions and others, very few.

What consideration has been given, or is being given, to standardise delegated provision across all dioceses, so that parishes, where a resolution has been passed, may expect the same level of delegated provision irrespective of diocese?

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

**A** The Standing Commission on the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles, which is a committee of the House of Bishops, has given a lot of thought and discussion to consistency of approach and the need for clarity in every diocese on the delegation of provision. This has come from its own research and discussion of the experiences of members of the Commission. The Standing Commission recently took a proposal to the House of Bishops which suggested that every diocese might create and publish a diocesan plan which would set out its approach to working within the Declaration, and suggested the areas which these plans might consider. The House of Bishops discussed this but there was not a majority in favour of asking dioceses to produce published plans at present.

**Canon Dr Felicity Cooke (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q139** Approximately 4% of parishes claim that, in theological conscience, they cannot fully accept women's ministry. What percentage of members of the Standing Commission on the Five Guiding Principles cannot, in theological conscience, fully accept women's ministry?

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

**A** Six out of the sixteen members of the Standing Commission, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests. In percentage terms, this is 37.5% of the membership. Of these six members, care has been taken to ensure that there is a 50/50 split between Traditional Catholic and Complementarian, and within those traditions, there is one member each from the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity.

**Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q140** Parishes who claim they cannot, in theological conscience, fully accept women's ministry have the right to additional episcopal oversight from a bishop who shares their theology of women's ministry. The proposals for Delegated Episcopal Ministry in GS 2386 envisage that both those who will, and those who will not, use the Prayers of Love and Faith should be able to receive episcopal ministry from a bishop who shares their position. Will those parishes which fully accept women's ministry similarly have the right to additional episcopal oversight from a bishop who shares their theology, rather than remaining solely under the episcopal authority of a diocesan bishop who has a different theology to theirs?

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

**A** There are no proposed changes to the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests which would change the nature of the provision for episcopal oversight set out in that document.

**Mr Stephen Corbett (Blackburn) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q141** In the light of a recently reported, and unfortunate safeguarding matter (which is in the public domain), is it normal practice across the Church of England, to confer cathedral honorary canonries on area deans when they take up their appointment, or shortly thereafter?

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

**A** The decisions regarding the awarding of the title of honorary canon to a lay or ordained person is a matter of local cathedral and diocesan policy. There has been no national analysis of these local policies and to undertake such analysis would require a considerable deployment of staff time within cathedrals, dioceses and the National Church Institutions.

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

**Q142** Over the past twelve months, how many: a) traditional anglo-catholics, and b) evangelicals who have identified themselves as being unable to receive the ministry of women, have been longlisted and shortlisted for episcopal posts?

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

**A** Over the past twelve months, 8 people who identify as 'Traditional Catholic', and 2 people who identify as 'Conservative Evangelical', have been longlisted for episcopal posts. Of these, 4 people who identify as 'Traditional Catholic', and one person who identifies as 'Conservative Evangelical' were shortlisted. (These figures



include numbers for the See of Richborough). These are the categories as listed on the diversity form and those filling out the form are asked to self-identify based on their definition of these terms. There is no specific question, at present, on the diversity form which asks whether the person is unable to receive the ministry of women and, therefore, we do not have concrete data on the numbers of people longlisted and shortlisted for episcopal posts who are unable to receive the ministry of women. Plans are in place to ask this specific question in an updated diversity form to be introduced in 2025.

\*Please note that in relation to the data requested and currently held, the term 'Conservative Evangelical' has historically been used in place of 'Complementarian Evangelical'. The new diversity data collection form will address this matter.

**The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q143** Was the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary, as a permanent non-voting member of the CNC and thus someone with an understanding of the process but with an independent perspective, consulted on any of the proposals from the House of Bishops on reforming the CNC prior to the discussion of them at St Hugh's on 18th September? If so with what outcome, and if not, why not?

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

**A** The Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary was not formally consulted about the detail of the proposals in advance of the House of Bishops meeting due to pressure of time. The Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary briefly spoke to the Bishop of London shortly before the proposals were discussed at the House of Bishops. More generally, the proposals were developed in response to representations received following the inability of two recent Crown Nominations Commissions (CNCs) to make a nomination. Many of the proposals suggested are not new and have been suggested previously in reports such as Oliver O'Donovan's, '[Discerning in Obedience](#)', [GS 2080](#) and [GS 2202](#). The 'Advisory Group for Appointments and Vocations' was consulted on the development of the proposals. It had been intended to consult the Central Members of the Crown Nominations Commission, and more widely, but the timing necessitated by the discussion at the House of Bishops in September 2024 meant this was not possible. The Central Members were consulted in November 2024 (the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary was present at this meeting) and their views are outlined in the appendix to GS 2379. Following the meeting of the House of Bishops in September 2024, the diocesan members of the most recent CNCs (Carlisle, Sodor & Man, Exeter, Ely, Coventry and Truro) were also consulted on the proposals.

**The Revd Canon James Blandford-Baker (Ely) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q144** Was the Elections Review Group—a specific sub-committee of the Business Committee of this Synod, and one which has expertise in consideration of electoral changes, and the effective outworkings of STV in church elections—consulted at any point on any of the proposed changes to the CNC or to the Vacancy-in-See-Committee regulations which have come from the House of Bishops? If so, with what outcome, and if not for what reason?

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

**A** No. The proposals were developed in response to representations received following the inability of two recent Crown Nominations Commissions (CNCs) to

make a nomination. Many of the proposals suggested are not new and have been suggested previously in reports such as Oliver O'Donovan's, '[Discerning in Obedience](#)', [GS 2080](#) and [GS 2202](#). The 'Advisory Group for Appointments and Vocations' was consulted on the development of the proposals. It had been intended to consult the Central Members of the Crown Nominations Commission, and more widely, but the timing necessitated by the discussion at the House of Bishops in September 2024 meant this was not possible. The Central Members were consulted in November 2024 and their views are outlined in the appendix to GS 2379. Following the meeting of the House of Bishops in September 2024, the diocesan members of the most recent CNCs (Carlisle, Sodor & Man, Exeter, Ely, Coventry and Truro) were also consulted on the proposals.

**The Revd William Harwood (Truro) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q145** What was the consultation process that led to the proposals for changing the CNC Standing Orders that was considered by the College and House of Bishops in September 2024?

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

**A** The proposals were developed in response to representations received following the inability of two recent Crown Nominations Commissions (CNCs) to make a nomination. Many of the proposals suggested are not new and have been suggested previously in reports such as Oliver O'Donovan's, '[Discerning in Obedience](#)', [GS 2080](#) and [GS 2202](#). The 'Advisory Group for Appointments and Vocations' was consulted on the development of the proposals. It had been intended to consult the Central Members of the Crown Nominations Commission and more widely, but the timing necessitated by the discussion at the House of Bishops in September 2024 meant this was not possible. The Central Members were consulted in November 2024 and their views are outlined in the appendix to GS 2379. Following the meeting of the House of Bishops in September 2024, the diocesan members of the most recent CNCs (Carlisle, Sodor & Man, Exeter, Ely, Coventry and Truro) were also consulted on the proposals.

**Dr Janette Allotey (Chester) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q146** Many women and girls face discrimination on the basis of sex and gender. Gender inequality underpins many problems which disproportionately affect women and girls, such as domestic and sexual violence, lower pay, lack of access to education, and inadequate healthcare (Amnesty International). Globally around 287,000 women died during and following pregnancy and childbirth in 2020 (WHO, 2024). Will the Church of England appoint a Lead Bishop for Justice for Women and a Justice for Women Panel in the way that these arrangements are being proposed for matters of racial justice - so that we can more effectively speak up about these issues?

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

**A** There are no plans to introduce a Lead Bishop for Justice for Women or a such a panel. Issues of gender inequality are woven into some of the existing work of the bishops and the broader Church across a range of different policy and advocacy areas. Bishops are working on and speaking up about issues including maternal mortality; the impact of cuts in foreign aid on women's health; the health and welfare of women in prison; justice for women victims of modern slavery; violence against women and girls; and support for survivors of domestic violence, to name a few examples. We recognise that there is more to do and I will consider the request. The process for appointing lead bishops is under review, seeking to ensure that

episcopal gifts and experience can be deployed more effectively for the wider Church. During the first half of 2025, a Task and Finish Group has been developing a new, sustainable model for Lead Bishops with clear role descriptions, an open appointment process, and ongoing opportunities for training and development.

**Ms Kat D’Arcy-Cumber (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q147** Has a group been established to consider how to offer support for Chaplains and Healthcare staff who will be called upon to enable assisted dying?

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

**A** The Bill which would legalise assisted dying has yet to pass all legislative stages in the House of Commons. We very much hope that MPs vote against the Bill at Third Reading. Such a hope reflects Synod’s overwhelming votes against the legalisation of assisted dying in both 2012 and 2022. We will continue to express that opposition.

As Parliament scrutinises the Bill, we will be advocating for a strong and robust conscientious objection provision, ensuring that no one is required to participate in assisted dying. This is a matter that Parliament takes extremely seriously.

If the Bill does come into law, assisted dying would probably not take effect for several years. Nevertheless, if the Bill moves towards implementation, we will put pressure on the Government to ensure that the NHS and other employers provide adequate support for chaplains of all faiths and healthcare staff. We will also investigate what support we can provide to both healthcare staff and chaplains in the pastoral and practical decisions they would face.

**Mr Charles Houston (Hereford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q148** In the light of the dramatic drop in congregations since pre-Covid, was the instruction to close churches, even for private prayer and broadcast of services by a single incumbent in March 2020, a decision that the Church took of its own volition to align with broader guidance or was there a specific instruction from the Government concerning places of worship?

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

**A** On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister addressed the nation. He said that people must stay at home and that various premises, including places of worship, were to close. On 24 March, the then Archbishops [wrote to the clergy](#) referring to the Prime Minister’s announcement and stated that church buildings must be closed. On 26 March the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (‘the Regulations’) came into force and gave legislative effect to the restrictions set out in the Prime Minister’s statement. Under regulation 5(5) a person responsible for a place of worship was required to ensure that the place of worship was closed except for funerals, the broadcast of an act of worship or to provide essential voluntary services or urgent public support services. Private prayer in churches was not permitted. It was a criminal offence without reasonable excuse to contravene regulation 5.

The Archbishops’ letter was in line with the Government regulation as regards private prayer in churches by members of the public. It went further than the regulation in requiring the broadcast of acts of worship be from homes only.

**Canon Robert Perry (Truro) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q149** The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration from 2021-2030 and recommends restoring nature by rewilding 30% of land by 2030 – recognising that healthy ecosystems can enhance people’s livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity. What steps can be taken to encourage the Church of England – as Dioceses and Parishes – to respond positively to meet this target?

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

**A** The Church of England’s Environment and Net Zero Programmes are already taking steps to support Dioceses and Parishes in reducing the carbon emissions arising from their buildings and taking practical actions to enhance biodiversity and nature recovery. This time last year, Synod passed a Land and Nature Motion ([GS 2319](#)) which seeks to encourage Dioceses to develop plans for how best to manage land holdings for the benefit of biodiversity. The Routemap to Net Zero recognises the importance of our land holdings in combating climate change and biodiversity loss and includes a milestone for aligning land management agreements with clear environmental policies at a diocesan level (Milestone 6.2.6) with the objective of enhancing biodiversity. At a parish level much is already being done to enhance the biodiversity around our churches and churchyards with a third of churches actively engaging with A. Rocha UK’s Eco Church initiative for example. The best way a parish can respond positively to the UN ambition is to work towards an Eco Church award. To that end, Caring for God’s Acre provides resources, advice and support for parishes on how they can monitor and enhance biodiversity through the considered management of church land and graveyards.

**Dr Cathy Rhodes (Sheffield) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q150** How is A Rocha UK’s Eco Church award scheme progressing: specifically, the numbers of Bronze, Silver and Gold Eco Church awards in churches and cathedrals, and also in Eco Diocese awards in dioceses?

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

**A** Eco Church continues to gain momentum with support from the Church of England’s Net Zero Programme. As of January 2025, over a third of churches (5,435 – 34.4%) have engaged with the Eco Church Initiative; with 1,870 churches (11.8%) achieving the bronze award, 899 the silver award (5.7%) and 40 the gold award (0.25%) and a further 2,626 churches registered. Since October 2024, there have been 70 new bronze awards, 71 silver awards and 7 gold awards.

In terms of the cathedrals, 12 have achieved the bronze Eco Cathedral award, 23 silver and 4 gold.

And of the 42 dioceses, 33 have achieved Eco Dioceses bronze with the remaining 9 dioceses having registered their interest in the award.

Through the Environment and Net Zero Programmes the remaining parishes and cathedrals will continue to be encouraged to aim for an award in witness to the 5<sup>th</sup> Mark of Mission.

**Canon Peter Adams (St Albans) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q151** For many members of Synod the work being done on Trust by Professor Veronica Hope Hailey and debated by Synod at its July sessions was a real sign of hope in what have often appeared dark times for this vital aspect of our life together as a Church. Noting GS Misc 1403 and both its reasons for the abeyance of this work and recognition of the heightened need for it at this time, would the House of Bishops share with Synod what they are doing to rebuild trust at this time?

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

**A** The House recognises the difficult circumstances for all within the Church of England at this time. We wish to lead the Church to a more hopeful, safe and trustworthy future, and are doing so through developments in multiple, complementary areas, of which the Trust work of GS Misc 1403 is a valuable contributor. In addition to continuing the in-depth interviews, Professor Hope Hailey is gathering data and insights that have helped other organisations repair trust after major breaches, and will report findings to the House of Bishops, the Archbishops' Council and General Synod. The February 2025 Group of Sessions includes many items where the Church is taking steps to improve its structures, practices and culture. For example, our options for the future of Church Safeguarding can be found in GS 2378, the next step for the National Church Governance Measure is outlined in papers beginning GS 2360, and those for the Clergy Conduct Measure in GS 2311 papers. We seek to work transparently with General Synod and the entire Church on these matters, and recognise we must work together to rebuild trust.

**Professor Helen King (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q152** The House of Bishops having decided in November 2023, as part of a review to increase their transparency, to publish summaries of their meetings including information on all topics discussed and voting figures where applicable, issued such summaries in December 2023 and March 2024 only. Why has this welcome practice been discontinued?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Thank you for your question. Following the review of transparency of the work of the House of Bishops (GS Misc 1387) the House of Bishops decided that minutes of its meetings should be published. Those are now available at [House of Bishops | The Church of England](#). That now removes the need for summaries of meetings. I recognise there has been a delay to publishing the minutes, but in future these should now appear in a timely manner after they have been agreed by the House.

**The Revd Andrew Atherstone (Oxford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q153** In May 2024, the House of Bishops committed itself to “maximum transparency”, including the publication of its agendas (before each meeting takes place) and its minutes, as outlined in GS Misc 1387. What processes are now in place to ensure the regular publication of these papers in an expeditious manner?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Thank you for the question and I am grateful for your persistence and help on the important question of how we can build trust through transparency in the work of the House of Bishops.

The minutes of the House of Bishops meetings are now available on the website at [House of Bishops | The Church of England](#). I recognise there has been a delay to publishing the minutes, but in future these should now appear in a timely manner



after they have been agreed by the House. Regarding the publication of the agenda – we are aware of further work needed to complete the points set out in GS Misc 1387 and will be working with colleagues on that over the next few months.

**Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford) to ask the Chair of the House of Bishops:**

**Q154** GS Misc 1387 (Transparency of the House of Bishops) which came to Synod in July of last year had a number of recommendations aimed at ‘increasing the openness and transparency of the work of the House’. For each of the four Recommendations, please confirm if the recommendation has been actioned and from what date, and if not, what is the cause of delay and an estimated timetable for implementation?

*The Archbishop of York to reply as Vice-Chair of the House of Bishops:*

**A** Thank you for your question.

The information is available in the table below:

	Recommendation	Complete	Commentary
1	“Minutes of all meetings of the House of Bishops should be published...once they have been approved at the subsequent meeting”	YES	Available at [ <a href="#">House of Bishops   The Church of England</a> ].
2	“Formal legal advice...or written advice from the Faith and Order Commission should be provided to the General Synod as an annex to the relevant GS paper”.  “Agenda for each House of Bishops meeting will be published with the circulation of papers”	YES  NO	See for example annex to GS 2378 and GS Misc 1407  Further work is needed to be done to make this happen.
3	“The House of Bishops should continue to meet without public attendance and should amend its standing orders to be honest that it is doing so”	IN PART	Except for September 2024, the House of Bishops has met in private. The Standing Orders have not yet been amended because of pressures of other legislative business coming before General Synod.
4	“The House of Bishops will propose changes to Canon H 3 and potentially other legislation to provide for acting diocesan bishops to vote at meetings of the House and General Synod”	NO	The proposed changes to Canon H3 have not yet been actioned because of pressures of other legislative business coming before General Synod.

## **SECRETARY GENERAL**

**The Revd Alex Frost (Blackburn) to ask the Secretary General:**

**Q155** When the answers are drafted to the questions submitted by Synod members and considered by the Secretary General and others prior to formal publication, is there any formal requirement for the answers to comply with a formal paramountcy principle of frankness and transparency. If not, will he undertake to liaise with all appropriate bodies to rectify such omission and reporting back to Synod in July?

*Mr William Nye to reply as Secretary General:*

**A** Other than Standing Order 114, there are no formal requirements for answers to General Synod Questions. Advice is provided to those answering questions and the staff supporting them which states that answers should be factual, concise and relevant.

## ANNEX: NOTICE BOARD INFORMATION FOR QUESTION 33

### **Mrs Sarah Finch (London) to ask the Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission:**

**Q33** In November 2000, General Synod debated a report entitled *Working with the Spirit: choosing diocesan bishops. A review of the operation of the Crown Appointments Commission* (GS 1405). It became to be known the *Perry Report*.

The *Perry Report* suggested that candidates should provide a personal statement "indicating how they see themselves and the development of their ministry, what gifts they believe themselves to have and how these might be used" (para 2.26). The report also made mention of a factual "nomination form" (para 2.24). One witness said the CAC [Crown Appointments Committee - the predecessor of the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)] "relies on hearsay and a 1½ page summary" (para 3.32).

Please would you outline (perhaps by way of the notice board) the CNC process as it currently operates and the papers supplied to the CNC for each candidate.

Details of the papers supplied for each candidate to the CNC are given below:

*Papers vary at different stages of the process. For shortlisting, members are provided with the following for each candidate:*

- *A 'Register of Ministers' (ROM) form – this is largely a factual account of the candidate's experience and qualifications, similar to a CV. The ROM also explores the candidate's, theology and ecclesiology. There is no maximum length to this document, but typically it will be 15-20 pages long.*
- *A 'Personal Statement' – this is a document setting out the candidate's vision for the Church and how their diocesan ministry would help realise that. This may be no more than 4 pages long.*
- *Reflections on calling – this is a response to why the candidate feels called to the specific vacancy at this time. This may be no more than one page long.*
- *Reflections on key personal criteria – this is an opportunity for the candidate to respond to the key selection criteria discerned through the development of the Role Profile and Person Specification. It may be 2 pages long.*
- *A 'Nomination Statement' is provided by the candidate's Diocesan Bishop or (for Diocesan Bishops) Archbishop.*
- *A candidate summary document is prepared by the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary using the information provided.*

*At interview the following papers are also made available:*

- *4 vacancy specific references (including one from the individual's Diocesan Bishop/Archbishop).*



### QUESTION 33

- *A psychometric report.*
- *A digital presence summary.*
- *A 'Diversity and Inclusion' statement written by the candidate.*
- *A safeguarding report provided by the NST after interviewing the candidate.*
- *Report from a school offering feedback on a video recorded by candidates on a topic decided by the CNC.*