GS 2468

Agenda

November Group of Sessions 2026

GENERAL SYNOD

NOVEMBER GROUP OF SESSIONS 2026

AT CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

TIMES OF SITTINGS

Tuesday 17 November	3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.
Wednesday 18 November	9.00 a.m to 12.00 p.m.
	2.00 p.m. to 3.15 p.m.

SERVICES

Tuesday 17 November

10.45 a.m.	Holy Communion in Westminster Abbey (*entry by ticket only)*
7.00 p.m.	Closing Worship in the Assembly Hall

Wednesday 18 November

9.00 a.m.	Opening Worship in the Assembly Hall
12.50 p.m.	Holy Communion in the Chapel

GENERAL NOTES

NOTICE OF MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND QUESTIONS

1. Save where a special note is included in the Agenda, the following rules apply under the Standing Orders of the General Synod to notice of motions and amendments other than procedural motions:

NEW BUSINESS

2. The period of notice of new business **has expired**, save for urgent or other specially important business included by the direction of the Presidents.

MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS ARISING OUT OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

3. Notice of motions and amendments arising out of business on the Agenda (other than amendments to legislative business and to proposed amendments to Standing Orders) must be delivered to the Clerk as follows (SOs 10-13 and 27):

Business appointed for the first day of the group of sessions (Tuesday 17 November)

5.30 p.m. on Monday 16 November.

Business appointed for the remaining days of the group of sessions

Business appointed for a *morning* sitting:

10 a.m. the day before.

Business appointed for an *afternoon* sitting:

4 p.m. the day before.

4. Under Standing Orders 10 and 27, such notice must be accompanied by evidence of support from two or more members of the Synod in addition to the member giving the notice. (This provision does *not* apply to amendments to legislative business or to proposed amendments to Standing Orders.)

5. Notice of amendments to legislative business or to proposed amendments to Standing Orders must be given in accordance with the notes accompanying the relevant item in the Agenda.

6. An amendment of which due notice has not been given may only be moved by permission of the Chair (SO 26(4)(a)).

7. The email address in respect of amendments and motions arising out of business on the Agenda is: **amendments@churchofengland.org**.

QUESTIONS

8. In exercise of its power under SO 12 the Business Committee has determined that notice of Questions under Standing Orders 112-113 must be delivered **not later than midday** on **Tuesday 3 November 2026**.

NOTICE

9. Notice must be given to the Clerk to the Synod in writing signed by the member or by e-mail to the relevant one of the email addresses below:

   For questions:

   questions@churchofengland.org

   For amendments and motions arising out of business on the Agenda

   amendments@churchofengland.org

ORDER OF BUSINESS

10. Business set out in the Agenda will be taken on the day and at the times shown. If business set down for a particular day is completed before the next timed business is due to be called, the opportunity will be taken to complete any business already partly considered at this group of sessions.

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

11. There will be an induction programme for Synod members from 2 p.m. on Monday 16 November in the Assembly Hall.

MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF LAITY

12. The House of Laity will meet from 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday 18 November in the Assembly Hall

MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

13. The House of Bishops will meet from 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday 18 November in the Harvey Goodwin Suite.

CONTACT

14. Please address queries or other matters not covered in these notes to the Clerk to the Synod as follows:

   clerk@churchofengland.org.

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2026

3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOMES

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

2 *The Archbishop of Canterbury* will give a Presidential Address.

REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 2469)

Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford) (Chair of the Business Committee) to move:

3 'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE (GS 2470)

4 Presentation under SO 107.

Note: the Business Committee has determined under SO 107(3) that this presentation should include an opportunity for questions.

NOT LATER THAN 5.45 p.m.

5 QUESTIONS

***Note**: The Business Committee has determined in exercise of its power under SO 12 that notice of any question must be delivered **not later than midday** on **Tuesday 3 November 2026**.*

7 p.m. Evening Worship

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2026

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

OPENING WORSHIP

LOYAL ADDRESS

The Archbishop of Canterbury to move:

6 'That a Loyal Address be presented to His Majesty the King.'

SPECIAL AGENDA IV: DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTION

MAINTAINING CHURCH BUILDINGS (GS 2471A AND GS 2471B)

The Revd Dr Tom Woolford (Blackburn) to move:

7 'That this Synod:

(a) acknowledge that many PCCs are struggling to maintain church buildings which are in poor states of repair and are not designed for mission and ministry in the 21st century;
(b) recognise that parishes in areas of high deprivation find it especially hard to meet these costs through fundraising alone, and that the current system of grant applications may set neighbouring parishes in competition with one another for funds;
(c) request the National Church Institutions to develop a national strategy for the preservation, maintenance and development of our buildings which serve our communities not just on Sundays but throughout the week.'

COVENANT FOR CLERGY CARE AND WELLBEING (GS 2466)

The Bishop of Hereford to move:

8 'That the Synod do take note of this Report.'

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2026

2 p.m. to 3.15 p.m.

FUNDING OUR CHURCH'S MISSION (GS 2472)

9 Presentation under SO 107.

Note: the Business Committee has determined under SO 107(3) that this presentation should include an opportunity for questions.

NOT LATER THAN 3.15 p.m.

10 PROROGATION

SPECIAL AGENDA IV – DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS

Note: this is the current list of Diocesan Synod Motions that have been received by the Clerk. These will only be debated once the Business Committee has allocated time for the item.

SAFER RECRUITMENT FOR PCCS AND SYNODS

… to move on behalf of Lichfield Diocesan Synod:

That this Synod request that the Archbishops Council:

(a) review current legislative provision dealing with disqualification from holding office on a PCC or synod constituted under the Church Representation Rules;

(b) consult the National Safeguarding Team on appropriate safeguarding measures;

(c) bring forward proposals to amend the Church Representation Rules and other relevant legislation to allow checks to be made as to the eligibility of individuals to hold office on a PCC or synod; and

(d) bring forward legislation to provide a robust and effective means for preventing those who are disqualified on safeguarding or other grounds from being elected to, or holding, office.'

April 2022

FAILURE TO APPOINT DIOCESAN BISHOPS

… to move on behalf of Coventry Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod

(a) recognise the great disappointment caused whenever an appointment is not made for a diocesan bishop,
(b) recognise in industry and national charitable organisations, that senior director roles are sometimes not filled after the first round of interviews, and that in many parishes several rounds of interview are required before a successful appointment,
(c) recognise the disappointment that must be felt in Carlisle and Ely, which after a failure to appoint a Bishop will each have to wait roughly a year before another set of interviews,
(d) request the Crown Nominations Commission to draft new proposals that enable more rapid return to shortlisting and interviews whenever an initial CNC process has concluded with no appointment, such proposals should limit delay for any further rounds of interviews to be no longer than six months.'

December 2024

SPECIAL AGENDA IV – DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS

REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

… to move on behalf of Norwich Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod

(a) thank the Church Commissioners for their ethical stewardship of the assets which they are responsible for managing on behalf of the Church and encourage them to maximise the sustainable value of distributions to the Church today whilst ensuring that the value of ongoing distributions is maintained to support future generations;
(b) welcome the Church Commissioners' planned disbursement to the Church of £1.2 billion during the 2023-25 triennium to support the ongoing mission and ministry of the Church of England and their intention of maintaining similar disbursement during the next two triennia;
(c) recognise the catastrophic and rapidly deteriorating picture for diocesan finances outlined in GS 2396A and the highly detrimental impact that this is having on the life and viability of the parishes and dioceses of our whole Church;
(d) welcome the Triennium Funding Working Group's work on spending priorities and the engagement opportunities that have been offered in recent months to a range of stakeholders, including to General Synod members and encourage such engagement as the norm for the development of spending plans in the future;
(e) call upon the Archbishops' Council, Church Commissioners and House of Bishops to prioritise within the 2026-2028 spending plans the proposals from the Diocesan Finances Review outlined in GS 2380, which aim to ease dioceses' current financial stress in a way which helps to revitalise parishes, develop the Church's long-term missional and financial health and increase clergy stipends and the starting level of clergy pensions; and
(f) in light of their responsibilities as charity trustees, call upon the Archbishops' Council and Church Commissioners, in consultation with the House of Bishops and Diocesan Secretaries, to consider how accountability for grant funding can be best achieved in order to provide effective mutual learning in enabling growth in parish ministry and church flourishing.'

March 2025

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

… to move on behalf of Lincoln Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod call on the House of Bishops to proceed at pace in facilitating implementation of all aspects of the Living in Love and Faith motion passed by the General Synod at its July 2024 Group of Sessions, including by revising the Pastoral Guidance to remove restrictions on the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in standalone services.'

November 2025

SPECIAL AGENDA IV – DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS

NATIONAL FUNDING

… to move on behalf of Hereford Diocesan Synod:

"That this Synod,

(a) having already noted, through the Redistribution of Funds Motion (GS 2396), as amended and passed in July 2025, the precarious financial position of many dioceses, concerns about the approach to National funding, and the increasing challenges of sustaining stipendiary ministry in dioceses;
(b) having called upon the Church Commissioners to continue to make available the maximum sustainable level of distributions in support of parishes and the work of clergy and other ministers;
(c) having called upon the Archbishops' Council (or its successor) and the Church Commissioners to ensure this Synod has a more formal role in the development of the future Funding Framework; and
(d) having called upon the Business Committee of the General Synod to schedule early in the next triennium a full debate that will enable Synod to express its view on the approach to disbursing funding, including support for local stipendiary ministry, based on robust financial modelling

Now:

(a) call upon the Business Committee of the General Synod to ensure that the full debate, previously called for, so it can express its view on the approach to disbursement of national funding, including support for local stipendiary ministry, and that adequate time and opportunity is provided for full consideration of the proposed modelling, including examination of statutory core allocations to diocesan stipend funds as distinct from discretionary or time-limited support;
(b) call upon the Archbishops' Council (or its successor), the House of Bishops and the Church Commissioners to ensure that the robust financial modelling to inform the development of the Funding Framework; to include
    i. national, diocese-by-diocese modelling of the financial support required from the Church Commissioners, not only to prevent the collapse of the diocesan and parish systems but revitalise the parish system across all of the dioceses.
    ii. specific examination of projected clergy numbers and deployment requirements across diverse contexts (urban, 'market town', rural) to support evidence-based decisions on how the Church can meet its mission objectives in every community;'
    iii. modelling to be undertaken, over appropriate time horizons (indicatively 25 years (generational), 7 years, 3 years and 1 year (for fine-tuning via short-term adjustment)).
(c) call upon the Archbishops' Council (or its successor) and the House of Bishops to establish a suitable, representative team from the dioceses and the National Church Institutions to engage directly with all dioceses in finalising this modelling and determining the financial needs of local ministry; and
(d) call upon the House of Bishops, in consultation with the Archbishops' Council (or its successor), to develop a strategic plan, as part of this review, for sustainable and ongoing growth in clergy numbers, to break the current cycle of managed decline and honour the covenant between the Church and those

offering themselves for ordained ministry, ensuring this plan informs both the financial modelling and the development of the Church's future Funding Framework.

December 2025

[Leicester Diocesan Synod passed a motion in similar terms]

PROGRESSING LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

… to move on behalf of Newcastle Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod:

(a) Lament the further hurt and pain that has been experienced by LGBTQI+ people as a result of the House of Bishops announcement on 15th October 2025, which appears inconsistent with the House of Bishops' apology issued on 14th February 2023 for the harm that LGBTQI+ people have experienced in the life of the Church and indicates a lack of commitment to a vision of radical Christian inclusion, and

(b) Call upon the House of Bishops to:

i. Offer leadership and direction that honours the inclusive majority of the Church of England and truly values LGBTQI+ people as beloved children of God.

ii. Confirm that it would be open to any priest, relying on Canon B.5.2, and on the good will of their Diocesan Bishop, to use a form of standalone service of thanksgiving and prayer for a same sex couple asking for such.

iii. Quantify and publish a risk assessment, taking account of likelihood and impact, of a successful legal challenge to ii) under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure (EJM), 1963.

iv. Commence the process of authorising standalone services of thanksgiving and prayer for same sex couples under Canon B.2 and in line with the indicative timeline contained in the legal advice received on this matter (GS Misc 1432)

(c) As a matter of urgency, call on the Archbishops' Council to introduce the legislative measures that would allow clergy to enter into same sex civil marriage and in line with the timescales set out in the legal advice received.'

December 2025

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS

… to move on behalf of Lichfield Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod

(a) condemn and discourage the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and reiterate that the use of NDAs is inappropriate in any HR and Safeguarding situation

(b) request the Archbishops' Council and the National Safeguarding Team to bring forward proposals for national guidelines on the use of NDAs and establish mechanisms for the reporting of NDAs

(c) request any Church of England institution, organisation or body to report on and register the existence and use of NDAs relating to HR and Safeguarding matters
(d) request the Archbishops' Council and the National Safeguarding Team develop appropriate guidance and mechanisms to enable existing NDAs relating to HR and Safeguarding matters to be monitored and where possible to be retracted and replaced with appropriate support.'

January 2026

MAINTAINING CHURCH BUILDINGS

… to move on behalf of Blackburn Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod:

(d) acknowledge that many PCCs are struggling to maintain church buildings which are in poor states of repair and are not designed for mission and ministry in the 21st century;
(e) recognise that parishes in areas of high deprivation find it especially hard to meet these costs through fundraising alone, and that the current system of grant applications may set neighbouring parishes in competition with one another for funds;
(f) request the National Church Institutions to develop a national strategy for the preservation, maintenance and development of our buildings which serve our communities not just on Sundays but throughout the week.'

January 2026

DISBURSEMENT OF NATIONAL FUNDING

…. to move on behalf of Lichfield Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod
(a) call on the Business Committee to schedule a debate to ensure that Synod can express its view on the approach to disbursement of national funding, including support for local stipendiary ministry, ensuring that adequate time and opportunity is provided for full consideration of the proposed modelling, including examination of statutory core allocations to diocesan stipend funds as distinct from discretionary or time-limited support;
(b) request the Archbishops' Council, the House of Bishops and the Church Commissioners to ensure that the robust financial modelling to inform the development of the 'Funding Framework' includes
    i. national, diocese-by-diocese modelling of the financial support required from the Church Commissioners, not only to prevent the collapse of the diocesan and parish systems but revitalise the parish system across all of the dioceses.
    ii. specific examination of projected clergy numbers and deployment requirements across diverse contexts (urban, 'market town', rural) to

support evidence-based decisions on how the Church can meet its mission objectives in every community;

iii. modelling to be undertaken, over appropriate time horizons (indicatively 25 years (generational), 7 years, 3 years and 1 year (for fine-tuning via short-term adjustment)).

(c) request the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops establish a suitable, representative team from the dioceses and the National Church Institutions to engage directly with all dioceses in finalising this modelling and determining the financial needs of local ministry; and

(d) request the Archbishops' Council in consultation with the House of Bishops to develop a strategic plan, as part of this review, for sustainable and ongoing growth in clergy numbers, to break the current cycle of managed decline and honour the covenant between the Church and those offering themselves for ordained ministry, ensuring this plan informs both the financial modelling and the development of the Church's future 'Funding Framework'.

April 2026

CHARITABLE GOVERNANCE AND SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DIOCESAN BOARDS OF FINANCE

… to move on behalf of Liverpool Diocesan Synod:

'That this Synod:

(a) take note of the official warning by the Charity Commission for England and Wales to the Trustees of the Diocesan Boards of Finance of the Dioceses of Liverpool and Chelmsford on 16th January 2026 in respect of charitable governance and oversight of safeguarding;

(b) call on the Archbishops' Council to identify how Diocesan Boards of Finance might be better enabled to discharge their charitable responsibilities for safeguarding, including

i. a clear statement of the current scope of the legal and charitable responsibilities of Diocesan Boards of Finance for safeguarding;

ii. any changes to the current structures of Diocesan Boards of Finance and of other charitable bodies within diocese that may be required,

iii. any changes to ecclesiastical or charity law, or to practice guidance, that may be required;

(c) call on the Archbishops' Council to bring forward to the General Synod any necessary legislation or legislative changes that may be required as a result.

May 2026