

## Synod briefing for Diocesan Secretaries

### Introduction

This is the summary of the February 2025 group of sessions. General Synod met from 10 to 14 February at Church House, Westminster. As always, this can be shared with colleagues and if there are any suggestions for improvements, we would be happy to hear them.

### Synod Business

This was an unusual group of sessions in that a number of items scheduled for debate were not taken. This includes [GS 2383 Appointment of one AC member](#), [GS 2388 Church Representation Rules](#), [GS 2389 House of Bishops Election Rules](#), [GS 2390 House of Clergy Election Rules](#), [GS 2391 House of Laity Election Rules](#), [GS 2392 Single Transferable Vote Regulations](#) and [GS 2388-92 Explanatory Notes](#), [GS 2393 Thy Kingdom Come – Renewing the Call to Prayer and Evangelism](#); and [GS 2398 Pattern of Future Dates 2027-2029](#). It is hoped that the Business Committee will schedule time for these on the July 2025 agenda.

In addition, the debate on the Diocesan Synod Motion on Redistribution of Funds which has been passed by a number of dioceses, was adjourned which means it will come back to Synod in the same form as it was presented in February. There were two amendments to this motion and they can be found on [Order Paper Eight](#).

The Business Done is available on the [website](#). The voting records and report of proceedings will follow in due course. Details of the decisions taken on each item are as follows.

[Item 1: Introductions and Welcomes](#): There were 21 new members, four acting bishops where dioceses are in vacancy, one Anglican Communion guest and one Ecumenical Guest welcomed to the meeting.

[Item 2: Presidential Address](#): The Archbishop of York gave his Presidential Address.

[Item 3: GS 2375 Report of the Business Committee](#): The Chair of the Business Committee, Canon Robert Hammond, spoke to the Report of the Business Committee and answered questions from members. The Synod took note of the Report on a show of hands.

[Item 4: Questions](#): There were 155 questions submitted at this group of sessions. In this session, questions 1 to 94 were reached. These were questions to the Clerk, Archbishops' Council Finance Committee, Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board, Council for Christian Unity, Church Buildings Council, Ministry Development Board, National Society Council, Committee for the Ministry of and Among Deaf and Disabled People, Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, Archbishops' Council Audit and Risk Committee, Legislative Reform Committee, Standing Orders Committee, Clergy Discipline Commission, Crown Nominations Commission, Dioceses Commission, Faith and Order Commission, Liturgical

Commission, Church Commissioners, Pension Board, Ethical Investment Advisory Group and the Archbishops' Council.

[Item 5: GS 2736 Makin Report](#): This updated Synod on the work undertaken since the publication of the Makin Report. There were two amendments, one of which was carried, so the final motion was as follows:

*'That this Synod, repenting of the failures of safeguarding in the Church of England detailed in the Makin report:*

- a) ask those in leadership roles across the Church of England to redouble work to implement best safeguarding practice in line with national policies and guidance, and note the further and forthcoming reforms set out in GS 2376; and*
- b) at the specific request of victims and survivors of John Smyth QC, recognise that the institutional failure to enact adequate disciplinary process means that this and other cases cannot simply be labelled 'historic' as they have continuing effects on the lives of those victims and survivors who suffer the consequences of the prolonged cover-up by the Church of England.'*

This was carried on a counted vote, with 384 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

[Items 6 & 7: GS 2377 Affirming the Racial Justice Agenda](#): This was a presentation followed by a debate on the work related to racial justice. The motion was as follows:

*'That this Synod:*

- a) noting that the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice has completed its mandated three-year term to monitor the implementation of the recommendation in From Lament to Action and that the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) is to be replaced, commend the members of the ACRJ for their exemplary service to the Church, and those dedicated members of CMEAC, past and present;*
- b) recognise the positive outcomes to date on the implementation of the recommendations in From Lament to Action but affirm the need for further effort in order to embed racial justice in the life and practice of the Church;*
- c) recommend that the national Church gives full consideration to the ACRJ's Appeal, Key Findings and Recommendations; ensuring crucial resources remain available including an effective governance framework comprising a Racial Justice Board, Panel, and Lead Bishop; that funding for the next triennium and the staffing be made available at the national and diocesan levels;*
- d) recommend that Dioceses share good practices and give priority to the collection and measuring of relevant data; and that deaneries and parishes are encouraged to participate in the racial justice programmes;*
- e) request that the NCIs through the Racial Justice Unit, undertake the necessary evaluations, including from Lament To Action, so that General Synod by 2027 can review the further progress made by Dioceses, the NCIs, TEIs and other related institutions and*

*stakeholders on From Lament to Action.'*

This was carried on a counted vote, with 311 in favour, 1 against and 6 abstentions.

Dioceses are asked to note paragraph (d) which asks them to share good practice and encourages the collection of relevant data. It is expected that Synod will be invited to engage with this further in 2027.

[Items 8 & 9: GS 2378 Future of Church Safeguarding](#): This was one of the key items for debate at the February group of sessions as it invited Synod to consider future models for safeguarding in the Church. There were seven amendments, two of which were carried. The final motion was as follows:

*'That this Synod:*

- a) thank all those involved in Church safeguarding, particularly the victims and survivors who give so generously of their wisdom and experience, often at great personal cost, and parish safeguarding officers who make sure that safeguarding is a priority in every level and all those who support them in dioceses;*
- b) affirm its commitment to greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England;*
- c) thank the Response Group for its work for greater independence in safeguarding in the Church of England; and, noting the significant reservations around model 4 in paragraph 62 of GS 2378 and the legal advice from VWV dated 31st January 2025, endorse model 3 as the way forward in the short term and call for further work as to the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4;*
- d) and lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to victims and survivors and the harm they have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church.'*

This was carried on a counted vote, with 392 in favour, 9 against and 6 abstentions.

[Item 10: GS 2379 Report of the Crown Nominations Commission](#): This was a take note debate on a report from the Crown Nominations Commission which updates Synod on matters relating to the CNC so far in this quinquennium, including its membership, appointment processes, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, proposed Standing Order changes and the pipeline to senior appointments. It was carried on a show of hands.

[Item 11: GS 2380 Diocesan Finances Review Update](#): This was a presentation updating Synod on the work relating to Diocesan Finances.

[Item 511: GS 2369 Safeguarding \(Clergy Risk Assessment\) Regulations 2025](#) and [GS 2369X Explanatory Notes](#): These regulations relate to safeguarding risk assessments of clergy under Canon C 30. They were approved on a show of hands.

[Items 12 & 13 GS 2381 Sports and Wellbeing Ministry](#): This gave an update on the National Sports and Wellbeing Project which has been running for the last 4 years with 7 dioceses to see how sports and wellbeing can be integrated into diocesan mission strategies. There was one amendment which was carried and the final motion was as follows:

*'That this Synod,*

- a) recognise the missional potential for churches of sport and ministry to reach people in every demographic, to generate opportunities to introduce people to the Christian faith, and to transform lives and communities;*
- b) call upon all dioceses, in partnership with church schools and Christian organisations already active in this field, to develop a coherent and resourced mission strategy for sport and wellbeing ministry; and*
- c) ask the Archbishops' Council to consider what steps should be taken at a national level to facilitate and coordinate diocesan development of sport and wellbeing ministry and ask the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board to look favourably on diocesan bids for such ministry.'*

This was carried on a show of hands.

Dioceses are asked to note paragraph (b) which requests that they develop a strategy for sport and wellbeing ministry.

[Item 15: GS 2382A](#) and [GS 2382B Strategy for Working Class Ministry](#): This was be a debate on the Private Member's Motion from the Revd Alex Frost (Blackburn) calling for a national strategy supporting people from a working-class background into ministry. The motion was as follows:

*'That this Synod welcome work that has already been done to encourage the ministry of people from working class backgrounds and request the Ministry Development Board to go further in developing a national strategy for the encouragement, development and support of vocations, lay and ordained, of people from working class backgrounds and report back to Synod to debate that strategy within 12 months.'*

This was carried on a show of hands, and it is expected that an update will be provided to Synod before the end of this quinquennium.

[Item 500 & 501: GS 2311B Clergy Conduct Measure, GS 2311Z Steering Committee Report](#) and [GS 2311X3 Explanatory Notes](#): This was the final stages of the Clergy Conduct Measure which sets out a new statutory framework and establish the jurisdiction for dealing with cases relating to clergy conduct.

This was carried on a counted vote by Houses as follows:

	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
<b>Bishops</b>	25	0	0
<b>Clergy</b>	128	0	1
<b>Laity</b>	145	0	2

[Item 505: GS 2384 Legal Officers \(Annual Fees\) Order 2025](#); and [GS 2384X Explanatory Notes](#): This is an updated Order following the debate at the July 2024 group of sessions. This was carried on a show of hands.

[Item 17: GS 2385 ‘Growing Younger and More Diverse’ – Hearing and Responding to the Voices of Young Adults \(18-25\)](#): This was a debate on the continuing work taking place to enable the voice of young adults to feed into the life of the national Church. There were two amendments, one of which was carried. The final motion was as follows:

*‘That this Synod:*

- a) welcome the voice of young adults (aged 18-25) as part of the church of today and commit to intentionally hearing and responding to their voices on a range of items of business in each subsequent group of sessions, employing a range of presentational activities, including surveys, reports, live presentations and videos*
- b) invite the formation of a group of up to 200 young adults drawn from across all dioceses to support the leadership development, faith journey and advocacy of young adults*
- c) request at least three and up to five young adults as representatives of this group at each session of Synod under Standing Order 122.1 recognising that this group to be the successor to the Church of England Youth Council while ensuring that links are made with the opportunities provided for the voices of active disciples who are under 18 to be heard in a way that feeds into Synod so that the two processes join together*
- d) welcome the work being done across the whole church to become ‘younger and more diverse’ ensuring young adults are at the centre of this mission, through implementing a development and advocacy programme for young adults in each diocese to feed into Synod business, and encourage more young adults to consider standing for election in subsequent quinquennia.’*

This was carried on a show of hands.

[Item 18: GS 2386 Living in Love and Faith](#): This was a presentation giving an update on the work related to Living in Love and Faith.

[Items 25 – 33: GS 2387 65th Report of the Standing Orders Committee](#): Proposed Changes to the Standing Orders relating to the Crown Nominations Commission. The amendments to the Standing Orders was set out in [Order Paper Six](#). The amendments set out in items 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 were carried. Items 30, 31, 32 and 33 were lost. The updated Standing Orders can be found [here](#).

[Item 502: GS 2360A National Church Governance Measure](#), [GS 2360Y Revision Committee Report](#) and [GS 2360X2 Explanatory Notes](#): This was the Revision Stage for the National Church Governance Measure which will introduce new governance structures for the national Church.

[Items 503 and 504:GS 2394 Mission and Pastoral Measure](#) and [GS 2394P Policy paper](#) and [GS 2395 Mission and Pastoral Regulations](#) and [GS 2394-95 Explanatory Notes](#): This was the First Consideration stage for the Mission and Pastoral Measure and Regulations. This is now at Revision Committee stage and members are invited to submit amendments to the Revision Committee **not later than 5.30pm 18 March** via [revisioncommittee@churchofengland.org](mailto:revisioncommittee@churchofengland.org)

[Item 21: GS 2396A](#) and [GS 2396B Redistribution of Funds](#): This was a debate on a Diocesan Synod Motion relating to redistribution of financial resources which has been passed by Hereford, Gloucester, Coventry, Bath & Wells, Blackburn, Chichester and Lincoln Diocesan Synods. It was adjourned and it is expected this will be taken in July 2025.

[GS 2397 Vacancy in See Committees Regulation](#) and [GS 2397X Explanatory Notes](#): This item updated the Vacancy in See Committee Regulations. The key changes approved by Synod are as follows:

- restrict election and nomination to vacancy in see committees so that no more than one person with a “relevant connection” to a particular parish or other worshipping community can be a member of a vacancy in see committee (except where two or more such persons are ex officio members) (paragraph 6A)
- require that at least one of the clerical members and one of the lay members of a vacancy in see committee elected to the Crown Nominations Commission must be female (paragraph 13(8A))
- restrict election from a vacancy in see committee of persons to serve on the Crown Nominations Commission so that not more than one person with a “relevant connection” to a particular parish or other worshipping community may be elected (paragraph 13(9A)).

This was carried on a counted vote by Houses as follows:

	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
<b>Bishops</b>	16	3	3
<b>Clergy</b>	83	64	4
<b>Laity</b>	93	73	0

The regulations came into force on 14 February 2025. The amended regulations can be found [here](#).

## Deemed and Contingency Business

[GS 2372 Safeguarding Code of Practice Managing Allegation and Reporting Allegations](#): These Codes of Practice were circulated under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. They were debated and carried on a show of hands. These will come into force on 1 September 2025.

[GS 2373 Safeguarding Code of Practice Religious Communities and Acknowledged Communities](#): These Codes of Practice were circulated under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. This were deemed approved and will come into force on 1 March 2025.

[GS 2371A](#) and [GS 2371 Add Confirmation Numbers to Statistics for Mission](#): This was a DSM from Canterbury seeking to include confirmation numbers on the annual Statistics for Mission online return and was debated by Synod. The motion was as follows:

*‘That this Synod:*

- a) request that the number of candidates presented for confirmation should be recorded, so they could be used by parishes, deaneries or dioceses as one of their measures if they so desired; and*
- b) support the recording of confirmations, alongside baptisms, weddings and funerals in the annual Statistics for Mission online return.’*

This was carried on a show of hands.

## Future meetings of Synod

Synod is due to meet from 11 July until 15 July at the University of York. There is no decision regarding a November Synod yet, but we are advising members to retain the dates in their diaries for now. The dates are 17 to 19 November and this will be in Church House if it takes place. There will then be two further groups of sessions in February and July 2026, and it is expected that the current Synod will be dissolved in July 2026.

## General Elections 2026

Later this year, after the July 2025 group of sessions, all dioceses will be asked for details of numbers of electors for proctorial elections and for numbers on church electoral rolls as of 31 July 2025, so that at its February group of sessions in 2026, Synod can determine the numbers to be elected by each diocese to the Lower Houses of the Convocations and the House of Laity respectively.

Work is being undertaken in preparation for the elections in 2026 and there will be further communications with diocesan offices regarding this in due course. We expect to hold a number of Zoom calls and meetings later in 2025 and early 2026.