Post Synod briefing for Diocesan Secretaries

Introduction

General Synod met from 10 to 14 July at the University of York. This note gives diocesan offices an update of the decisions made and includes some details about preparation for the forthcoming elections.

Synod Business

The following provides an update on each item discussed at the July group of sessions.

- Presidential Address: The Archbishop of York gave an Address to Synod
- Ecumenical Address: The Most Reverend Luc Terlinden, Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels and Primate of Belgium gave an Address to Synod
- GS 2443 Report of the Business Committee: The Synod took note of the Report of the Business Committee.
- GS 2444 All Kinds of Minds: Affirming neurodiversity in the life of the Church: This highlighted the work going on to enable the Church to be a place where neurodivergent people can flourish. The motion which was follows was carried on a show of hands:

  'That this Synod: recognising neurodivergent people, lay and ordained, as lovingly and purposefully made and a blessing to the church and wider society whose experience adds to the richness of experience of all; and acknowledging the need to work towards the removal of barriers to their flourishing at every level of the church by challenging and transforming unjust structures and processes which disadvantage and discriminate against them, therefore:

  a) affirm the work of the national Neurodiversity Working Group, and encourage National Church Institutions and other Church bodies to develop inclusive practices and policies which promote the flourishing of neurodivergent people.
  b) affirm the importance of, and need for, neurodivergent-led neurodiversity training throughout the church, and encourage the church at all levels to develop appropriate training led and shaped by neurodivergent people that builds understanding and confidence in the ministry of, with and among neurodivergent people.
  c) call on each diocese to appoint neurodivergent people as Neurodiversity Champions, following the pattern of the existing Diocesan Disability Advisors network, ensuring the role is appropriately embedded within diocesan structures so they may be best placed to contribute to the identification and removal of barriers.
  d) encourage all churches and church members to listen and respond to the experience of neurodivergent people in their specific local contexts to enable the flourishing of all.'

  Dioceses should note paragraph (c) which requests that dioceses to appoint neurodivergent people as neurodiversity champions.

- Questions: In the two sessions of questions, supplementary questions were asked of the Clergy Discipline Commission, Crown Nominations Commission, Faith and Order

Commission, Liturgical Commission, Church Commissioners, Pensions Board, Ethical Investment Advisory Group, Archbishops' Council and House of Bishops.

- GS 2445A and GS 2445B Digital Communications and the Church: This was a Private Member's Motion from the Revd Dr Christopher Landau which requested a review of the digital communications for the National Church Institutions. Following a debate, the procedural motion 'next business' was moved and carried, so the debate lapsed.
- GS 2360W National Church Governance Measure: Report from the Legislative Committee: This was a report from the Legislative Committee following its engagement with the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. The Synod took note of the report.
- GS 2446 Clergy Conduct Rules: These Rules support the new statutory framework of the Clergy Conduct Measure. There were 12 amendments, 1 was lost, 1 was withdrawn and 10 were carried. This will now be laid before Parliament under the Statutory Instruments Act 1946.
- GS 2447 House of Laity Election (Amendment) Rules: These amend Rules 9(2)d and 15(5)(c) which should have included references to the community roll of a cathedral, Royal Peculiars and mission initiatives among relevant qualifications for nomination. These were carried on a show of hands and came into force on 14 July 2026.
- GS 2448 House of Clergy Election (Amendment) Rules: These correct the date upon which clergy qualify for inclusion on the register of electors for the Universities and TEIs constituency and make another minor correction. These were carried on a show of hands and came into force on 14 July 2026.
- GS 2449 Promoting Unity in Our Nation: This was a presentation and discussion session to allow Synod to reflect on the political and social polarisation in our country.
- Address by Anglican Communion Guest: The Right Reverend Jorge Cabral, Bishop of the Lusitanian Church, addressed Synod.
- GS 2450 Hope For All Creation: Synod was invited to engage with the report commissioned by the Environmental Working Group and Faith and Order Commission which underpins the work on Net Zero and the introduction of the new Feast of Creation in Christ.
- GS 2408B Festival of Creation in Christ and Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya: This was the final stage for the liturgical business to add a Festival of Creation in Christ and a Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya to the Common Worship Calendar. There was a counted vote by Houses as required. The results were as follows:

	In Favour	Against	Abstentions
Bishops	29	0	0
Clergy	101	0	0
Laity	120	1	1

The Festival of Creation in Christ and the Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya are now authorised for use from the present date until a further resolution of the Synod.

- GS 2418 (Revised) Routemap to Net Zero: This item updated Synod on work undertaken on moving to Net Zero by 2030 since the debate in July 2022. The Synod took note of the report on a show of hands.

- GS 2451A and GS 2451B Kairos Palestine: This was a Diocesan Synod Motion from Carlisle which asks Synod to engage with the challenges faced by Palestinian Christians. There were seven amendments, 2 were lost, 2 lapsed and 3 were carried. The final motion was as follows:

  'That this Synod respond to the call of Palestinian Christians to stand in solidarity with them and their fellow Palestinians in non-violent resistance to the ongoing occupation. We lament the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives and the violations of human dignity and rights on both sides, as well as the displacement of population. We commit to a better understanding of the situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, seeking peace and security for all the peoples of those lands and pursuing that which leads to the establishment of a just and lasting peace.
  In particular, we:

  a) reject antisemitism, anti-Muslim hostility and all forms of prejudice based on religious affiliation and ethnicity;
  b) acknowledge with repentance the Church's historic contribution to antisemitism and to the situation now affecting the Palestinian people, reaffirm our commitment to inter-faith dialogue, including Christian-Jewish dialogue and encourage a deeper understanding of Judaism and other faiths;
  c) pray for all victims of the current conflicts in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and for a lasting peace;
  d) hear the Kairos Palestine Declaration (2009), the Cry for Hope (2020), the Call for Repentance (2023) and Kairos Palestine II (2025) as heartfelt expressions of the lived experience of Palestinian Christians and:
     i. encourage the Church of England at all levels to engage with those documents as part of a quest for greater understanding of the situation;
     ii. ask the Faith and Public Life Division to commend resources that enable Dioceses and local churches to promote a full understanding of the situation and to respond through prayer, theological study, advocacy and practical support for the work undertaken by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and other Churches in the service of the people of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory;
  e) encourage the Church of England at all levels to engage with those documents as part of a quest for greater understanding of the situation, alongside continued dialogue with Jewish and Muslim voices in the pursuit of justice, equality, peace and reconciliation;
  f) call on Church investors to implement and demonstrate a leading approach to responsible investment relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and:
     i. to review their investment policies in the light of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 on the illegality of the occupation of Palestinian territory;
     ii. to request the Church Commissioners and Church of England Pensions Board to report back, on a triennium basis, on the progress and success of their approaches;
     iii. the bodies named above to support the EIAG to develop guidance for wider Church of England investors on how to manage human rights risks relating to occupied territories and conflict.

g) ask His Majesty's Government to work urgently for a lasting peace in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, that will ensure safety and security for all parties and the upholding of the rights and inherent dignity of all people.'

This was carried following a counted vote by Houses and the result was as follows:

	In Favour	Against	Abstentions
Bishops	25	0	5
Clergy	115	20	30
Laity	113	27	35

- GS 2452A and GS 2452B Support for Looked After Children and those In Care: This was a Private Member's Motion from Billy-Jo O'Leary, Rochester which encourages support for children and young people in the care system. There was one amendment which was carried. The final motion was as follows:

  'That the Synod, recognising the enormous challenges facing looked after children and those in care;

  a) call upon the House of Bishops to appoint a lead Bishop with a specific brief recognising the enormous challenges facing Looked after children and care experienced young adults and those who care for them, to ensure their voice is heard; and
  b) request dioceses take proportionate action to support these children and young people and the communities who care for them.'

  This was carried following a counted vote of the whole Synod and the results was 282 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

- GS 2453 Archbishops' Council Annual Report: This was the annual report on the work of the Archbishops' Council. The Synod took note of the report on a show of hands.

- GS 2454 Archbishops' Council Budget 2027 and Proposals for Apportionment 2027: This set out the budget for the Archbishops' Council for the next financial year. The Synod approved the budget and the apportionment for the Ministry Training Fund on a show of hands.

- GS 2455A and GS 2455B Same-Sex Relationships Compatibility with Christian Discipleship. This was a Private Member's Motion from Prof Helen King which asks Synod to affirm that a committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship. There were three amendments, one was lost, one lapsed and one was carried. The final motion was as follows:

  'That this Synod

  a) affirm that all baptised, believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ;
  b) delight in the lives and ministries of LGBTQIA+ people in the Church of England;
  c) recognise a legitimate range of theological perspectives, held in good conscience, across the Church of England, on the right ordering of committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationships, and;
  d) recognise that this includes views that affirm and views that reject the position that there are no fundamental objections to being in such a relationship and

that such a relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship and ministry.'

It was lost following a counted vote by Houses. The results were as follows:

	In Favour	Against	Abstentions
Bishops	11	14	4
Clergy	93	79	0
Laity	101	83	0

- GS 2456 Vacancy in See Committee (Amendment) Regulation: These are revised regulations to clarify a number of points, including the position of members during a dissolution. There was one amendment which was carried. It was then proclaimed as an Act of Synod. Diocesan offices have been sent the updated regulations to be proclaimed at the next Diocesan Synod meeting.

- GS 2457 Renewing Trust: Addressing the Challenges of Trustworthiness in the Church of England: The item presented the final report from the Trust and Trustworthiness project begun in 2023. It provided insights into the challenges to trust and trustworthiness faced by the Church, a deeper theological rationale to undergird actions to rebuild and renew trust, and an assessment of the areas of work that are now in operation to nurture a culture of trust and develop trustworthy processes and governance. The Synod took note of this on a show of hands.

- GS 2458 Report of the Standing Orders Committee: The report was not debated at the group of sessions, but the deemed variations were approved. These amended references to "faxes" in the Standing Orders to cover "other electronic means"

- GS 2459 Appointment of one Member of the Archbishops' Council: This was the formal approval of the appointment of the Revd Richard Springer as a member of the Archbishops' Council for a five year term. This was carried on a show of hands.

- GS 2460 and GS 2467 Update from Lead Safeguarding Bishop: The Rt Revd Robert Springett, Lead Bishop for Safeguarding gave an update on work relating to safeguarding, including an update on progress following the Makin Report.

- GS 2461A and GS 2461B: Protecting Nature on Church Commissioners' Land in line with the scale and urgency of the Climate and Biodiversity Crises: This was a Private Member's Motion from the Revd Canon Val Plumb which asks the Church Commissioners to protect nature on 30% of their land. There was one amendment which was carried. The final motion was carried on a show of hands and was as follows:

  'That this Synod In light of the UK Government's adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ("GBF") including their commitment to protect 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 [which it calls 30by30 on land in England], and the Church's responsibility to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth;

  a) recognise the important role that large landowners such as the Church can play in supporting the delivery of the objectives of the GBF and responding to the escalating nature and climate crises;
  b) request the Church Commissioners to consider responsible investment efforts to continue to contribute to the UK Government's implementation of the goals of the GBF, where consistent with their charitable objectives, specifically:

i. aim to ensure that Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable or improving condition, or under active management to support and improve the habitat;
ii. where appropriate, continue to support nature restoration projects including in collaboration with environmental organisations, with the objective to support positive biodiversity outcomes;
iii. in relation to farmland, engage and collaborate with tenants about sustainable farming;
iv. in relation to UK forestry, aim to maintain 100% certification of harvested timber and manage forests in line with sustainable practices, with areas managed for native species and biodiversity in line with the approved forest plan;
v. in relation to UK development land, aim to exceed 10 per cent Biodiversity Net Gain for developments across the portfolio; and
vi. report on their activities and outcomes in 2027 as per the Land and Nature motion (GS 2319) in February 2024'

- GS 2410A Abuse (Redress) Rules: This proposed amendments to the Rules that were approved in July 2025.There were three amendments which were carried. This will now be laid before Parliament under the Statutory Instruments Act 1946.

- GS 2462 Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2026 and GS 2463 Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2026: These were the usual annual fees orders providing for the annual retainers paid to diocesan registrars and for court fees in the ecclesiastical courts. They were debated and carried on a show of hands. The Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order and the Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order will be laid before Parliament and both will come into force on 1 January 2027.

- GS 2464 Draft Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations: This contains amendments to time limits for appeals to an employment tribunal in line with recent Government legislation. This was deemed approved as no members requested to debate it. It will be laid before Parliament and come into force on 1 October 2026.

- GS 2465 Ecclesiastical Property (Exceptions from Requirement for Consent to Dealings) Order 2026: This will increase the financial threshold above which PCCs must obtain the permission of the diocesan authority before undertaking property transactions from £250k to £400k; and that the next review of the threshold should be 2031. This was deemed approved as no members requested to debate it. It will be laid before Parliament and come into force on 1 October 2026.

- GS Misc 1448 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Archbishops' Council: This was the annual report on the work of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Archbishops' Council. It was requested to be debated and Synod took note of it on a show of hands.

Elections to General Synod 2026

As noted above, the House of Clergy Election Rules and House of Laity Election Rules were amended, and these will be updated on the elections webpage next week. The guidance has also been updated. There was a Synod question asking whether dioceses can stipulate additional requirements beyond those in the Rules. The response noted that there is no such provision and dioceses can only require those things set out in the rules.

The Archbishop of York formally dissolved the Convocation of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury formally dissolved the Convocation of Canterbury. As the Convocations have been dissolved, General Synod is automatically dissolved. The Bishops' offices have been sent the citations to require the diocesan bishops and elected clergy to attend the inauguration of the 12th Synod. These formal processes are the prompt for the elections process to begin. Civica will be sending dioceses links to the individual nomination sites over the next two weeks. As a reminder, the list of electors needs to be sent to Civica by 31 July.

The initial letter to electors must be sent out by 27 July and there is a two week timeframe for electors to come back with either a revised email address or a request to participate via post. Civica is aware that there may be changes to the list of electors up until 12 August. The invitations to nominate will go out on 14 August.

The list of electors for the Universities and TEIs constituency is being compiled now, and the list will be available as soon as possible for dioceses to check against their list of electors.

As a reminder, the election timetable is as follows:

HOUSE OF CLERGY

Date	*HCR Rule*	*Stage*
Tuesday 14th July	7(5)	Diocesan electoral registration officer gives the names and addresses of electors to the secretary of each deanery synod
Monday 20th July	7(6)	Secretary of each deanery synod responds to the diocesan electoral registration officer
Monday 27th July	7(7)	Diocesan electoral registration officer gives the names and addresses to the presiding officer
Wednesday 29th July	10(1)	Presiding officer sends initial letter to each elector
Friday 14th August	12(1)	Invitations to nominate issued
Monday 7th September	12(4) 36(2)	Close of nominations Deadline for receipt of election addresses
Monday 21st September	38(2) 38(9)	Invitations to vote issued Voting period opens
Monday 12th October	38(9)	Voting period for voting by paper closes
Tuesday 13th October	38(9)	Voting period for voting by using elections portal closes
Wednesday 14th October	39(2)	Count begins and lasts for three days
Monday 19th October	39(6) and (7)	Declaration of result and preparation of result sheet

HOUSE OF LAITY

Date	*Rule*	*Stage*
Tuesday 14th July	CRR 54(5)	Diocesan electoral registration officer gives the names and addresses of electors to the secretary of each deanery synod
Monday 20th July	CRR 54(6)	Secretary of each deanery synod responds to the diocesan electoral registration officer
Monday 27th July	CRR 54(8)	Diocesan electoral registration officer gives names and addresses to the presiding officer
Wednesday 29th July	HLR 6(1)	Presiding officer sends initial letter to each elector
Friday 14th August	CRR 55(2)	Invitations to nominate issued
Monday 7th September	CRR 55(4) HLR 10(4)	Close of nominations Deadline for receipt of election addresses
Monday 21st September	HLR 15(2), (8)	Invitations to vote issued Voting period opens
Monday 12th October	HLR 15(8)	Voting period for voting by paper closes
Tuesday 13th October	HLR 15(8)	Voting period for voting by using elections portal closes
Wednesday 14th October	HLR 16(2)	Count begins and lasts for three days
Monday 19th October	HLR 16(6), (7)	Declaration of result and preparation of result sheet

All presiding officers and other staff involved in the elections should have received the first newsletter from Civica on 24 June. Please do come back to us if you did not receive this, as Civica will be using this as a means of communicating with all dioceses, alongside the individual engagement with each diocese.