The Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024
as amended by
the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2025
and
the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2026

with effect from 13th July 2026

PART 1

PRELIMINARY

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) This Regulation may be cited as the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024.

(2) This Regulation comes into force two months after the day on which it is made.

Interpretation

2.—(1) A reference in this Regulation to a provision of a Measure is a reference to that provision as amended, extended or applied from time to time.

(2) A reference in this Regulation to the single transferable vote system is a reference to the form of that system that is for the time being provided for in the rules made by the General Synod under its Standing Orders, subject to Rule 75 of the Church Representation Rules (STV constraints).

(3)In the application of this Regulation to the diocese of Sodor and Man,

(a) a reference to the bishop's council is to be read as a reference to the standing committee of the diocesan synod established in accordance with rule 44(2)(h) of the Church Representation Rules as they have effect in the Isle of Man;

(b) paragraph 5 is to have effect as if sub-paragraph (2)(c) were omitted;

(c) paragraph 6A is to have effect as if—

(i) in sub-paragraph (1), for the words "and, in the case of a relevant connection with the same cathedral church, A is of the same relevant description as B" there were substituted "and, in the case of a relevant connection with the same parish, mission initiative or cathedral church, A is of the same relevant description as B"; and

(ii) for sub-paragraph (2), there were substituted—

"(2) Accordingly, if two or more persons who are of the same relevant description and have a relevant connection with the same parish, mission initiative or cathedral church, are proposed and seconded for election under

paragraph 5, or considered for nomination under paragraph 6, not more than one of them may be elected or nominated."

PART 2

CONTINUATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Continuation of Committees

3.—(1) In each diocese, a body called the Vacancy in See Committee continues to be established at all times.

(2) The members of the Committee are—

(a) each person who is an ex officio member under paragraph 4,

(b) each person who is elected under paragraph 5, and

(c) any person who is nominated under paragraph 6.

(3) The Committee may not co-opt additional members.

(4) A person ceases to be a member of the Committee on ceasing to hold the office by virtue of which the person was eligible for, or entitled to, that membership.

Ex officio members

4.—(1) In each diocese, each of the following is an ex officio member of the Vacancy in See Committee—

(a) each suffragan bishop of the diocese,

(b) any full-time stipendiary assistant bishop who is a member of the house of bishops of the diocesan synod,

(c) the dean of the cathedral of the diocese or, if the dean is unable to serve, a member of the Chapter of the cathedral elected by the Chapter,

(d) if there are no more than two archdeaconries in the diocese, the archdeacon of each archdeaconry or, if there are more than two archdeaconries, two archdeacons elected by and from those archdeacons,

(e) each proctor elected from the diocese or from a university or theological education institution in the diocese as a member of the Lower House of Convocation of the province,

(f) each person elected from the diocese as a member of the House of Laity of the General Synod,

(g) the chair of the house of clergy of the diocesan synod, and

(h) the chair of the house of laity of the diocesan synod.

(2) In the case of the diocese of Salisbury—

(a) the dean of Jersey and the dean of Guernsey are also ex officio members of the Committee;

(b) the reference in sub-paragraph (1)(f) to the persons elected to the House of Laity of the General Synod includes a reference to each of the two representatives elected to that House under the Channel Islands (Representation) Measure 1931.

(3) A person is not eligible for election under sub-paragraph (1)(c) if the person is a member of the Committee in some other capacity.

(4) If there is a tied vote in an election under sub-paragraph (1)(c) or (d), the election is to be decided by the drawing of a lot.

(5) In the case of a diocese which has more than one cathedral, the reference in sub-paragraph (1)(c) to the cathedral of the diocese is to be read as a reference to each of the cathedrals.

Elected members

5.—(1) The following are to be elected to the Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese by the house of clergy and the house of laity of the diocesan synod, the members of each of which together constitute a single electorate—

(a) two clerks in holy orders (or more than two in so far as sub-paragraph (2) applies), other than an archdeacon or a person in episcopal orders, each of whom is beneficed in the diocese or licensed under seal by the bishop of the diocese, and

(b) two lay persons (or more than two in so far as sub-paragraph (2) applies), each of whom is an actual communicant (within the meaning of the Church Representation Rules) who is aged 16 or over and—

(i) whose name is on the roll of a parish in the diocese,

(ii) whose name is on the community roll of the cathedral church of the diocese which is not a parish church,

(iii) who, in a case where the area of the diocese includes Westminster Abbey, St. George's Chapel, Windsor or the cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford, is declared by the dean to be a habitual worshipper, or

(iv) who is declared by the leader of a mission initiative in the diocese to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative.

(2) The number of persons to be elected under sub-paragraph (1)(a), and the number of persons to be elected under sub-paragraph (1)(b), may each exceed two but only in so far as the bishop's council of the diocese decides, having taken account of each ex officio member's place of residence, that that is necessary to ensure—

(a) that each archdeaconry in the diocese will be adequately represented,

(b) that the number of members of the Committee who are in holy orders is, so far as possible, equal to the number who are lay persons, and

(c) that the Committee has at least 21 members.

(3) A person is eligible for election under this paragraph only if the person is proposed and seconded by members of the house of clergy or the house of laity of the diocesan synod.

(4) An election under this paragraph is to be conducted using the single transferable vote system.

(5) The term of office of a member elected under this paragraph—

(a) begins on 1st January following the most recent election of the members of the diocesan synod, and

(b) subject to paragraph 3(4), ends on 31st December following the next election of the members of the diocesan synod.

(6) In the case of a diocese which has more than one cathedral, the reference in sub-paragraph (1)(b)(ii) to the cathedral of a diocese is to be read as a reference to any of the cathedrals.

Nomination

6.—(1) The bishop's council of a diocese may nominate no more than four additional persons as members of the Vacancy in See Committee of the diocese.

(2) A person is eligible for nomination under this paragraph only if—

(a) the person reflects a special interest in the diocese, or

(b) the person's nomination is, in the opinion of the bishop's council, appropriate for the purpose of securing a better reflection of the diocese as a whole.

(3) The term of office of a member nominated under this paragraph—

(a) begins on the date on which the nomination takes effect, and

(b) ends on the date on which the elected members of the Committee cease to hold office.

Restriction on election and nomination

6A.—(1) A person (A) may not be elected under paragraph 5 or nominated under paragraph 6 if another person (B) is an elected member of the Vacancy in See Committee under paragraph 5, or a nominated member under paragraph 6 and both A and B have a relevant connection with the same—

(a) parish;

(b) cathedral church;

(c) place of worship mentioned in paragraph 5(1)(b)(iii); or

(c) mission initiative

and, in the case of a relevant connection with the same cathedral church, A is of the same relevant description as B.

(2) Accordingly, if two or more persons who have a relevant connection with the same parish, place of worship mentioned in paragraph 5(1)(b)(iii) or mission initiative, or who are of the same relevant description and have a relevant connection with the same cathedral church, are proposed and seconded for election under paragraph 5, or considered for nomination under paragraph 6, not more than one of them may be elected or nominated.

(2A) For the purposes of sub-paragraphs (1) and (2), A is of the same relevant description as B if A and B are both clerks in holy orders or A and B are both lay persons.

(3) A person has a relevant connection with a parish if—

(a) the person is authorised by the bishop under Canon C 8, D 3, E 6 or E7 to exercise ministry in the parish or in a benefice to which the parish belongs; or

(b) the person's name is on the roll of the parish.

(3A) A person is not to be treated as having a relevant connection with a parish for the purposes of sub-paragraph (3)(a) if the only authorisation the person has to exercise ministry there is—

(a) a licence or written permission to officiate throughout the diocese, or throughout an area of the diocese which is greater than the area of the benefice to which the parish belongs, or

(b) a licence under the Extra-parochial Ministry Measure 1967.

(4) A person has a relevant connection with a cathedral church if—

"(a)(i) in the application of this Regulation to diocese of Sodor and Man, the person holds office in the cathedral church;

(ii) in the application of this Regulation to the diocese of Oxford, the person is a member of the body constituted as the Dean and Chapter by the Statutes of Christ Church or receives a stipend, or is employed, in respect of work carried out under the Dean and Chapter;

(iii) in its application to any other diocese, the person is an executive member of the Chapter of the cathedral church (within the meaning of the Cathedrals Measure 2021) or receives a stipend from, or is employed by, the Chapter;"

(b) in the case of a cathedral church which is a parish church, the person's name is on the roll of the parish of which the cathedral church is the parish church; or

(c) in the case of a cathedral church which is not a parish church, the person's name is on the community roll of the cathedral church.

(5) A person has a relevant connection with a place of worship mentioned in paragraph 5(1)(b)(iii) if—

(a) the person is the dean or a residentiary canon of that place of worship or receives a stipend from, or is employed by, its body corporate, or

(b) the person is declared by the dean to be a habitual worshipper under paragraph 5(1)(b)(iii)."

(6) A person has a relevant connection with a mission initiative if—

(a) the person has received authority from the bishop which entitles the person to officiate in accordance with the bishop's mission order that endorses and makes provision for the mission initiative; or

(b) the person is declared by the leader of the mission initiative to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative under paragraph 5(1)(b)(iv).

Casual vacancies

7.—(1) A casual vacancy among the elected members of the Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese (including a vacancy occurring because not enough candidates have been elected) must be filled within six months of the vacancy occurring.

(2) The vacancy must be filled by a further election by the house of clergy and the house of laity of the diocesan synod, the members of each of which together constitute a single electorate.

(3) But if a vacancy of the bishopric is announced before the vacancy on the Committee has been filled, the vacancy on the Committee—

(a) is to remain unfilled until the Committee has completed its consideration of the vacancy of the bishopric, and

(b) is to be filled within six months of the completion of that consideration.

(4) Where a clerk in holy orders elected under paragraph 5(1)(a) becomes the archdeacon of an archdeaconry in the diocese, that clerk ceases to be a member of the Committee under that provision; but that does not prevent the clerk becoming a member under paragraph 4(1)(d).

PART 3

BUSINESS AND PROCEDURE

Officers

8.—(1) The chair of the Vacancy in See Committee of each diocese is to be elected from the members of the Committee by the members of the bishop's council of the diocese at the council's first meeting following the elections under paragraph 5.

(2) The chair holds office for the same term as the members elected under paragraph 5, subject to paragraph 9(3).

(2A) A casual vacancy in the office of chair must be filled as soon as practicable by a further election from the members of the Committee by the members of the bishop's council of the diocese.

(3) A deputy chair of the Committee is to be elected by and from the members of the Committee at its first meeting and is to exercise the functions of the chair if there is a vacancy in the office of chair or if the chair is absent or otherwise unable or unwilling to act.

(4) The Secretary of the Committee is to be appointed by the bishop's council of the diocese at its meeting referred to in sub-paragraph (1).

(5) The Secretary of the Committee must be a fit and proper person.

(6) The Secretary of the Committee may not be a member of the Committee; accordingly, if a member of the Committee is appointed Secretary, the person immediately ceases to be a member of the Committee.

Meetings

9.—(1) The Secretary of the Vacancy in See Committee of each diocese must convene meetings of the Committee in accordance with the directions of the Committee or the Chair.

(2) The Secretary of the Committee must invite the Prime Minister's Secretary for Appointments and the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments to attend meetings of the Committee.

(2A) If the Convocations and the General Synod are dissolved before the Committee has completed its consideration of a vacancy, the members under paragraph 4(1)(e) and (f) (proctors and members of the House of Laity) are to continue to serve as members of the Committee until the completion of its consideration of the vacancy if they would otherwise cease to do so only as a result of the dissolution; and accordingly, any successor elected to replace such a member as a proctor or member of the House of Laity is not to serve for the Committee's consideration of that vacancy.

(3) For the purpose of completing the consideration of a vacancy on which the Committee has begun work, the members elected under paragraph 5 are to continue to serve as such despite the expiry of their term of office; and where the bishop's council decides under paragraph 8(4) to appoint a different person as Secretary of the Committee, the former Secretary is to continue to act as such.

(4) Subject to paragraph 8 and the preceding provisions of this paragraph, the Committee may regulate its own business and procedure.

Remote meetings

10.—(1) A reference in this Regulation to a meeting of the Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese includes a reference to a meeting which persons may attend, speak at, vote in or otherwise participate in without all of the persons, or without any of the persons, being together in the same place.

(2) The places at which a meeting of the Committee may be held include electronic, digital and virtual locations, web addresses and conference call telephone numbers.

(3) A person is to be regarded as present at a meeting of the Committee if the person is at that time able to hear and be heard, and where practicable see and be seen, by the other persons present.

(4) A reference in this Regulation to being present at a meeting of the Committee includes a reference to being present by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcast or live interactive streaming.

Guidance on procedure etc.

11.—(1) As soon as practicable after the announcement of a vacancy of a bishopric, the diocesan secretary must provide to each member of the Vacancy in See Committee of the diocese a booklet, which has been prepared by the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments and approved by the Legal Adviser to the General Synod.

(2) The booklet must explain—

(a) the dual role of a diocesan bishop as the bishop of the diocese and as a member of the House of Bishops of the General Synod,

(b) if the bishop is, or is likely to become, a member of the House of Lords, the role of the bishop as a member of that House, and

(c) the importance of giving due weight to the roles referred to in paragraph (a) and, where applicable, the role referred to in paragraph (b) when considering candidates for a vacant bishopric.

(3) The booklet must contain—

(a) a description of the procedures to be followed for the nomination of persons to fill a vacant bishopric,

(b) a copy of this Regulation in the form in which it for the time being has effect,

(c) an up-to-date copy of the relevant guidance notes and code of practice, and

(d) recommendations for the procedure to be adopted for meetings of the Committee.

PART 4

VACANCY OF BISHOPRIC

Requirement to meet

12.—(1) The Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese must hold at least two meetings about a vacancy of the bishopric.

(2) The first meeting is to be held as soon as practicable after the vacancy has been announced.

(3) At the second meeting, the Committee must discuss the needs of the diocese.

(4) Having discussed the needs of the diocese, the Committee—

(a) must prepare a statement of those needs,

(b) must send the statement to the Crown Nominations Commission of the General Synod, and

(c) must send the Commission such factual information about the diocese and its organisation as the Commission may request.

Election of members of Crown Nominations Commission

13.—(1) The Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese must elect from its members persons to be members of the Crown Nominations Commission in connection with the discharge by the Commission of its functions relating to a vacancy of the bishopric.

(2) The number of members to be elected under this paragraph is the number for the time being required by the Standing Orders of the General Synod.

(3) An election under this paragraph is to be held at such stage in the proceedings on the Committee's consideration of the vacancy as the Committee decides; and after that decision has been made, the Secretary of the Committee must notify the decision to each member who was not present at the meeting at which it was taken.

(4) A person is eligible for election under this paragraph only if the person is proposed and seconded by other members of the Committee.

(5) An election under this paragraph is to be conducted by a ballot of those present and voting at a meeting of the Committee.

(6) An election under this paragraph is to be conducted using the single transferable vote system.

(7) Neither the chair of the Committee nor a member who is in episcopal orders is eligible for election under this paragraph.

(8) At least half of the number of members elected under this paragraph must be lay persons.

(8A) At least one of the lay persons, and at least one of the clerical persons, elected as members under this paragraph must be female (unless no female person of the relevant description is proposed and seconded for election).

(9) Not more than one of the following members may be elected under this paragraph—

(a) an archdeacon;

(b) the dean of the cathedral of the diocese;

(c) a member of staff of the National Church Institutions;

(d) a member of staff of the Diocesan Board of Finance or the Diocesan Board of Education for the diocese.

(9A)—(a) If two or more persons who are proposed and seconded for an election under this paragraph have a relevant connection with the same parish, cathedral church, place of

worship mentioned in paragraph 5(1)(b)(iii) or mission initiative, not more than one of them may be elected.

(b) "Sub-paragraphs (3) to (6) of paragraph 6A (which specify how a person may have a relevant connection) apply for the purposes of this sub-paragraph.

(10) In the case of a diocese which has more than one cathedral, the reference in sub-paragraph (9)(b) to the cathedral of the diocese is to be read as a reference to any of the cathedrals.

Death, resignation etc. of member elected to Crown Nominations Commission

14.—(1) Where, before the Crown Nominations Commission has agreed on a name to be submitted to the Prime Minister, a member of the Commission elected under paragraph 13 dies, resigns or becomes incapable of acting as such or is otherwise unable or unwilling to participate as such, that member is to be replaced using the voting records of the previous election in accordance with Standing Order 134(8) to (11) of the General Synod as modified by sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) of this paragraph.

(2) The reference to the Clerk of the Synod is to be read as a reference to the chair of the Vacancy in See Committee of the diocese concerned.

(3) Standing Order 134(9) is to have effect as if there were added at the end "or, if the chair and deputy chair of the Vacancy in See Committee jointly decide that there is insufficient time for a fresh election to be held before the Crown Nominations Commission is due to meet to consider the vacancy, the chair and deputy chair of the Committee—

(a) must jointly appoint a member of the Committee to act as a member of the Commission, and

(b) in making the appointment, must have regard to the desirability of maintaining among the members of the Commission elected under paragraph 13 of the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 2024 a similar balance of opinion and of the interests which those members represented."

Direction of archbishop not to proceed with vacancy

15.—(1) This paragraph applies where a vacancy of a bishopric has been announced but—

(a) no steps have been taken under this Regulation to fill it, and

(b) the Dioceses Commission has decided to prepare a reorganisation scheme under section 7 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 which—

(i) would abolish the diocese in respect of which the vacancy has been announced, or

(ii) would, in the opinion of the Dioceses Commission, have such a significant effect on the diocese that it would be desirable to delay the appointment of a bishop to fill the vacancy.

(2) The Dioceses Commission may request the archbishop of the province which includes the diocese to direct that no steps are to be taken under this Regulation in relation to filling the vacancy.

(3) On receipt of a request under sub-paragraph (2), the archbishop may give a direction as provided in that sub-paragraph; and, if the archbishop does so, this Regulation has effect accordingly.

(4) The archbishop must revoke a direction given under sub-paragraph (3) if—

(a) the reorganisation scheme (unless it is a scheme to dissolve the diocese) is confirmed by Order in Council under section 8 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007,

(b) the General Synod decides not to approve the scheme under section 7 of that Measure,

(c) the Dioceses Commission informs the archbishop that it has decided not to proceed with the scheme, or

(d) the Dioceses Commission informs the archbishop that it has decided it would not be appropriate to further delay filling the vacancy.

(5) If the archbishop revokes a direction given under sub-paragraph (3), this Regulation is to have effect as if the announcement of the vacancy had been made on the day on which the direction is revoked.

(6) A direction under sub-paragraph (3) or a revocation under sub-paragraph (4) must be in writing, must be signed by the archbishop and must be sent to the Secretary of the Vacancy in See Committee of the diocese; and the archbishop must send a copy of the direction or revocation to—

(a) the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments,

(b) the Secretary of the House of Bishops,

(c) the Prime Minister's Secretary for Appointments, and

(d) the Dioceses Commission.

PART 5

MISCELLANEOUS

Power of archbishop to make supplementary provision

16.—(1) In carrying out the provisions of this Regulation, the archbishop of each province—

(a) may make provision for any matter not provided for in this Regulation;

(b) may, where difficulties arise, give whatever directions the archbishop considers appropriate for removing those difficulties.

(2) But this paragraph does not authorise the archbishop—

(a) to validate anything that was invalid when it was done, or

(b) to give a direction that is contrary to a provision of this Regulation.

(3) During a vacancy in the archbishopric or where, because of absence or illness, the archbishop is unable to exercise a function under this paragraph, the functions of the archbishop under this Regulation are to be exercised by the other archbishop.

Validity of proceedings

17. The proceedings of the Vacancy in See Committee of a diocese are not invalidated by a vacancy in the membership of the Committee or a defect in the qualification, election or appointment of any of its members.

Revocation

18. The following are revoked—

(a) the Vacancy in See Committees Regulation 1993;

(b) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2003;

(c) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2007;

(d) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2008;

(e) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2013;

(f) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2021;

(g) the Vacancy in See Committees (Amendment) Regulation 2023.

Transitional provision

19.—(1) The revocation and restatement of provisions by this Regulation does not affect the continuity of the law.

(2) A reference, express or implied, in this Regulation, other legislation or any other instrument or document, to a provision of this Regulation is, subject to its context, to be read as being or including a reference to the corresponding provision revoked by this Regulation, in relation to times, circumstances or purposes in relation to which the revoked provision had effect.

(3) A reference, express or implied, in legislation or any other instrument or document to a provision revoked by this Regulation is, subject to its context, to be read as being or including a reference to the corresponding provision of this Regulation, in relation to times, circumstances or purposes in relation to which the corresponding provision has effect.

(4) A reference to a provision revoked by this Regulation which is contained in a document made or issued after the commencement of the revocation is, subject to its context, to be read as being or including a reference to the corresponding provision of this Regulation.

(5) Anything done, or having effect as if done, under a provision revoked and restated by this Regulation, and effective immediately before the commencement of the corresponding provision of this Regulation, has effect after that commencement as if done under that corresponding provision.

(6) The revocations made by this Regulation do not affect the operation of a transitional provision or saving relating to the commencement of a provision restated in this Regulation so far as the transitional provision or saving is not specifically restated in this Regulation but remains capable of having effect in relation to the corresponding provision of this Regulation or otherwise.

Proclaimed as an Act of Synod by the General Synod at York on 13th July 2026.

A.S. McGregor
Registrar of the General Synod