

MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES – July 2020

ELECTION TO FILL A CASUAL LAY VACANCY

1. The frequency and length of meetings of the full General Synod follow a regular pattern of two or three meetings in a calendar year.
2. Membership of the Synod lasts for five years, but the term of office of the successful candidate who fills the current lay vacancy will be until the dissolution of the Synod in July 2021.
3. Anyone who has been considering whether to stand for election for a normal five year term of office may find it helpful to serve for this one year opportunity.
4. The months in which meetings are normally held are February, July and November. The February and November meetings are non-residential and take place at Church House, Westminster, London SW1, but the July meeting is normally held residentially at the University of York.
5. The Business Committee of the General Synod informs Synod members in the agenda paper for each meeting of the precise dates on which the Synod will meet, in the light of the needs of that particular agenda.
6. However, this year the normal pattern of meetings had to be changed from physical to virtual, due to Covid-19.
7. Also due to Covid-19, the General Synod elections for the 2020-2025 quinquennium had to be postponed and existing members were asked to continue in office until the Synod is dissolved in July 2021.
8. The legislation requires that the extension of this General Synod means that elections have to be held to fill any Casual Vacancies which occurred more than one year before July 2021.
9. Therefore, in the Diocese of Bristol an election must be held to fill the lay casual vacancy that was created by the resignation of Mr Ian Yemm.
10. At the time of writing, it is proposed that there will be a meeting of the Synod in November 2020, between the 23rd and 25th, but the exact timing is yet to be confirmed, as is a decision on whether it will be held physically or virtually.
11. Decisions on the duration of meetings scheduled for February and July 2021 will be announced as soon as possible, including whether they will be physical or virtual.
12. Members are not required to record their attendance at any full meeting and do not have to comply with any convention or Standing Order requiring them to attend any minimum number of meetings. It rests with each individual to do the best he or she can in the light of other commitments and particular concerns in each Synod agenda. The Business Committee do, however, try as far as possible to help members by ensuring that particular items of business begin at published times.
13. Any member of the Synod may be invited by the Appointments Committee to serve on a number of permanent or temporary bodies but he or she is entirely free to refuse such

invitations. In accordance with normal practice, individual members' preferences are carefully taken into account in fixing dates of committee meetings and every effort is made by the Appointments Committee to share out the committee work fairly amongst all members who are qualified to deal with the tasks to be undertaken.

14. Although in the above paragraphs the term "meeting" has been used, it may be helpful to explain that the practice of the Synod, following the Convocation custom, is to call all its sittings in full Synod on one day a "session" and any number of sessions on consecutive days a "group of sessions". This is only a matter of terminology and has no bearing on the frequency or length of sessions.
15. Expenses for attending the Synod are reimbursed by the diocese. For precise details of this please contact Matthew Hall, Deputy Diocesan Secretary., **matthew.hall@bristoldiocese.org** or at the Diocesan Office, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU. Tel: 0117 906 0100.