



Diocesan Synod – Essential Information

How many Synods are there?

Diocesan Synods are usually held three times a year, in Spring, Summer and Autumn and are held at St John's House.

When does the meeting begin?

Diocesan Synods are usually held on a Saturday morning between 9.30am and 1.00pm. Each meeting begins with an act of worship which may be led by the Bishop, a member of the Diocesan Synod or a person or group who will be leading an item during the meeting.

How is the agenda composed?

The agenda for both the Diocesan Synod and the Bishop's Council is the responsibility of the Synod Arrangements Committee. Agenda items to be considered for inclusion should be sent to the Diocesan Secretary. Agenda items can also come as a referral from General Synod, a motion submitted by Deanery Synod, or matters brought to Synod by one of the Boards or Committees of the diocese.

Are there any specific rules?

All the rules concerning Diocesan Synod can be found in the Diocesan Synod Standing Orders – available on the diocesan website.

How does Synod work?

Diocesan Synod is chaired by the President (The Bishop) or the Vice-Presidents (Chairs of the Houses of Clergy and Laity).

The agenda normally states who will be putting the motion and the usual conduct of meetings is that this person introduces the motion and then the chairman opens the debate to the floor. To participate in a debate, members simply raise their hands and wait to be called by the Chair. When called to speak, members make their way to the lectern and state their name and deanery before making their contribution. At the conclusion of the debate the person putting the motion is given an opportunity to respond to the points made before any amendments and motion are put to the vote.

Standing Orders 49 – 55 deal with the when, what and how of amendments. Although there is provision for the Chairman to accept an amendment during Synod which has not previously been notified this is unlikely to occur. You will find the date by which amendments should be notified to the Diocesan Secretary at the end of each agenda.

Questions Under Standing Order 75

This Standing Order allows members to ask questions of the officers of Synod (Diocesan Secretary and Registrar) or the chairman of Boards and Committees within the diocese. The date by which these questions have to be submitted is printed at the end of each agenda. The Synod Arrangements Committee particularly wishes to draw members' attention to this opportunity as they believe that it is under-utilised.

Diocesan Board of Finance

Following a decision taken by the Synod and the DBF in a previous triennium the members of Diocesan Synod also make up the membership of the Board of Finance. This means that when Diocesan Synod meets part of the time is used to hold a meeting of the Board of Finance; once a year one of the meetings will be an AGM. The day to day work of the Board has been managed by the Finance Committee and the officers of the Board.

In March 2015, Diocesan Synod approved changes to the Diocesan governance structure which will see the Bishop's Council take over the role of the Finance Committee as trustees of the Board of Finance. These new arrangements will be implemented from 1st January 2017.

How do I become a member?

Membership of Diocesan Synod is split into two broad categories: Elected Membership and Ex Officio Membership.

Ex Officio members are in post on account of another role they hold within the diocese. For example, the Bishops, Archdeacons and members of General Synod are all Ex Officio members of Diocesan Synod.

Elected members are appointed on a triennial basis. Elections are held every three years to elect members from each deanery within the diocese. Information about elections is usually



sent to every member of Deanery Synod and is publicised on the Diocesan website and on E-news.

You do not need to be a member of Deanery Synod to be elected on to the Diocesan Synod, but the Deanery Synod act as the electorate. This means that if you would like to become a member of Diocesan Synod, you must be nominated by a member of your local Deanery Synod. Your nomination must also be seconded by another member of your local Deanery Synod. If there are more nominees than vacancies on the Diocesan Synod, an election would be held to select which nominees became members. It is Deanery Synod members who would vote in this election.

A full membership list of the Diocesan Synod can be viewed on the diocesan website. This also details where there are current vacancies. If you are interested in filling a vacancy listed for your deanery, please contact your Area Dean or Lay Chair.