

GENERAL SYNOD

HOUSE OF BISHOPS - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. A meeting of the House of Bishops was held at Bishopthorpe Palace on 21-22 May 2012. Those matters reported at paragraphs 2-9 below were taken in Committee of the whole House, under SO 14.
2. The House considered **the draft legislation on Women in the Episcopate** which, following completion of the Final Drafting Stage at the February group of sessions, stood referred to it under Article 7 of the Synod's Constitution. During their deliberations, the House had the benefit of advice from the Steering Committee for the draft legislation.
3. The House rejected four amendments. Two of these, by removing the reference to 'delegation' from clause 2 of the draft Measure, were designed to change the legal basis on which male bishops would exercise authority under diocesan schemes. One of these amendments would have introduced the concept of one or more designated 'mission societies' and the other would have created a 'co-ordinate' jurisdiction as envisaged in amendments rejected by the Synod in July 2010. The two others were designed to add to clause 5 of the draft Measure a requirement that the Code of Practice should give guidance on two of the principles- on non-discrimination in relation to the discernment of vocations and on the designation by the archbishops of particular sees in their provinces- adopted by the House of Bishops in December.
4. The House made two amendments to the draft Measure and decided to return it, and the draft Amending Canon, to the General Synod for final approval. The two amendments were:
 - An addition to the interpretation provision in clause 8, making it clear that the use of the word 'delegation' in clause 2 of the draft Measure relates to the legal authority which a male bishop acting under a diocesan scheme would have and is distinct from the authority to exercise the functions of his office which that male bishop derived from his orders. Such delegation should not be taken as divesting the diocesan bishop of any of his or her authority or functions.
 - An amendment to clause 5(1), which already sets out the list of matters on which guidance will need to be given in the Code of Practice that the House of Bishops will be required to draw up and promulgate under the Measure. The amendment adds to the list so that guidance will now need to be given on the selection by the diocesan bishop of male bishops and priests the exercise of ministry by whom is consistent with the theological convictions as to the consecration or ordination of women on grounds of which PCCs have issued Letters of Request.

5. The House considered **the liturgical business entitled ‘Additional Eucharistic Prayers’** which, following completion of the Revision Committee Stage at the February group of sessions, stood referred to it under Article 7 of the Synod’s Constitution. The House decided to return the business to the General Synod for final approval, and expressed its approval of clarificatory guidance for situations where the proposed optional questions might not be appropriate.
6. The House considered **likely business at the July Group of Sessions.**
7. The House agreed to recommend that diocesan policies in relation to **travel expenses of clergy attending interviews for new posts in England** should not treat clergy from **the Diocese in Europe** differently from other Church of England clergy.
8. The Archbishop of Canterbury briefed the House on **recent developments within the Anglican Communion**, in particular noting developments regarding the Anglican Communion Covenant.
9. The House received a report on **Civil Partnerships** from the Review Group chaired by the Bishop of Sodor and Man on its 2005 pastoral statement on civil partnerships. It gave particular consideration to the present moratorium on the eligibility of priests in celibate civil partnerships for the episcopate. It did not conclude that discussion and agreed to return to the subject and to the report more generally at its next scheduled meeting in December 2012.
10. The House considered a draft response to the Government’s consultation document on **Same-Sex Marriage**, to be submitted before the close of the consultation period on 14 June 2012. The House endorsed the general shape of the response, considered a number of detailed suggestions regarding the content of the draft and invited the Archbishops to finalise the draft in the light of the discussion.
11. The Bishop of Leicester, Convenor of the Lords Spiritual, addressed the House on the subject of **the 2012 Queen’s Speech and House of Lords Reform**. The House noted these developments.
12. The Eighth Annual Report of **the Clergy Discipline Commission** following paper was approved under the House’s deemed procedure.

Church House, SW1P 3AZ
31 May 2012

Ross Gillson
(Administrative Secretary)